

Documents Relating to the Mission of the Minor Friars to China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

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XV

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE MISSION OF THE
MINOR FRIARS TO CHINA IN THE THIRTEENTH
AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

By A. C. MOULE

OF the monuments of medieval missionary work very few can surpass in interest the letters written from China by John of Monte Corvino, Archbishop of Khanbalig, and Andrew of Perugia, Bishop of Zaitun; and many persons will be grateful to the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society for printing a more accurate text of these letters than has hitherto been available. The letters, together with most of what is known of the history of the missions to the Far East, of which the writers were members, are found in a single MS. which is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. The Librarians, whose extreme courtesy and kindness have made the following transcript possible, inform me that this MS. is now numbered "Latin 5006", and that it dates from the first half of the fourteenth century. It contains 192 leaves, parchment, measuring 0 m. 20 × 0 m. 15. The credit of discovering the letters appears to belong to Luke Wadding, the voluminous historian of the Minor

Friars, who was born at Waterford 16 October, 1588, and died 18 November, 1657, or to an unnamed friend of his.¹

¹ Wadding has the following entry in his *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, Rome, 1650, p. 270 :

“ODORICVS DE PORTV NAONO, oppido Fori Julij, prouinciæ S. Antonij, . . . Scripsit

Historiam suæ peregrinationis sexdecim annorum.

Librum de mirabilibus mundi.

Chronica compendiosa à mundi exordio ad finem fermè Pontificatus Ioannis XXII. quo tempore ipse decessit. Accepi ab amico M.S. & ex ijs plura in rem nostram decerpsi.

Sermones diuersos.

Epistolas multas.

Obijt anno 1331. die 14. Ianuarij in vrbe Vtinensi sepultus apud suos consodales.”—with the marginal note : “Vide to. 3 Annal. an. 1331. nu. 11.” (The reference for Odoric to the 2nd edition of the *Annales Minorum* is tom. vii, an. 1331. nu. 13-20.) The *Chronica compendiosa* is the book in question, though whether Latin 5006 is the actual copy used by Wadding’s friend is not so certain (cf. p. 555, n. 1 below). Wadding’s persistent ascription of the book to Odoric (based perhaps on such passages as that quoted in n. 2, p. 557 below) is not accepted by others. Sbaralea in his *Supplementum ad Scriptores Trium Ordinum S. Francisci*, printed 1806, p. 444, has the following note : “JOANNES A MORTILIANO oppido diœces Utinensis cognomento LONGUS . . . obiit in urbe Foro Julij anno 1363. . . .

“*Joannis de Vtino Summa de etatibus extare dicitur ms. in Biblioth. Paris. Colbert. cod. 3601., & creditur hujus Joannis, qui modo de Vtino a Conventu, modo a Mortiliano a loco nativitatis dicebatur: in ead. Biblioth. habetur alter codex ms. num. 5496. hoc titulo: Incipit liber. de etatibus. & generationibus procedentibus a primo homine. & de principijs regnorum, & regum uteris testamenti. Et precipue de Regibus. Israel. & Iuda: & post 4. folia [fol. 5 rº] legitur: In isto libro annotate sunt sub breuitate. ystorie plurime uteris testamenti. De hebreis. iudeis. & gentilibus. paganis. orientalibus. & occidentalibus. & ytalicis & Romanis. & precipue de bellis & victorijs. romanorum consulum. Regum. & imperatorum. & senatorum. in tribus partibus mundi geste fuerunt. In Asya. Affrica & Europa. postea de nouo testamento. ystorie. de ortu. & profectu religionis xpistiane. & sancte ecclesie. & conuersione Romanj imperij. ad dominum ihesum xpistum. & pontificum romanorum. & imperatorum producte usque ad annos domini .m.ccc.xxxj. Usus est hoc Chronico Waddingus in Annal. Min. ad an. 1307. num. 6., dicitque brevi modo concinnatum perductum usque ad initium Pontificatus Benedicti XII., seu an. 1335.; & ad an. 1321. n. 1. ait deduci ab oriente mundo usque ad mortem Joannis XXII., nempe usque ad annum 1334., illudque attribuit citatis locis, & in hoc Opere [*Scriptores Ord. Min.*] B. Odorico Forojulijensi, nescio quo auctore; sed hoc negant Baluzius [in notis ad Papas Avenionenses], & post eum Echard de Scriptor. Ord. Prædic. to. 1.*

From his transcript, which was printed in the first edition of *Annales Minorum* (to. iii, 1635), which I have not seen, the following printed texts of the letters are derived :—

RAYNALDUS, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, tom. xv, 1691 : first letter of John (beginning at *Unam ecclesiam*), pp. 6, 7, with marginal note: *Ext. in M.S. cod. Odorici Forojul. & ex eo apud Wad. hoc an. n. 10.*; letter of Andrew, pp. 318, 319.

ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. iii, pt. ii, 1728 : first letter of John (incomplete), pp. 528, 529; second letter of John (extracts), p. 530; letter of Andrew (extracts), pp. 531, 532.

WADDING, *Annales Minorum*, 2nd ed., 1731, etc. : first letter of John, tom. vi, pp. 69, 70; second letter of John, pp. 71, 72, 91, 92; letter of Andrew, tom. vii, pp. 53, 54.

MOSHEIM, *Historia Tartarorum Ecclesiastica*, 1741 : letters of John, pp. 114–120; letter of Andrew, pp. 120–123.

From one or other of these texts, derived from a common source, all the more recent quotations and versions with which I am acquainted are made. The most notable version is that by Colonel Yule in *Cathay and the way thither*, 1866, vol. i, pp. 197–209, 222–225. Mention

pag. 550., eo quod legatur pag. 184 [fol. 184 r^o]. *Sanctus frater Odoricus passionem sanctorum .iiij^{or}. fratrum minorum sic descripsit*; varia quoque continet, quæ non habet B. Odoricus, & varia B. Odoricus, quæ non sunt apud istum: putant tamen esse alicujus Franciscani, eo quod multa, & quidem præclara de hoc Ordine commemorat. Num idem [sc. Joannes a Mortiliano], ac *Pantheon*, de quo supra?"

The two MSS. are respectively those now numbered Latin 3473 (*olim* Colbert 3600, not 3601), a parchment codex of the fifteenth century containing (on ff. 94 to 103) only the beginning of the Chronicles, viz. from the Creation to the Christian era, and Latin 5006 (*olim* Colbert 5496), which has been described. Cf. also *Catalogus cod. man. Bibliothecæ Regiæ*, pars tertia, 1744, tom. iii, p. 423, III^{MDLXXIII}; tom. iv, p. 29, v^{MVI}. Sbaralea's extracts have been corrected from the original.

Further evidence against Odoric's authorship is found in the mention on fol. 185 v^o of the death of Dominic and Stephen of Hungary "circa annis dominj. m.ccc.xxx.iii uel. xxxiiij.". The date of Stephen's death is given in Wadding's *Scriptores* as 22 April, 1334, as Mr. L. Giles has kindly ascertained.

ought to be made also of the extremely interesting article entitled "The early Franciscan Missions in China" by the late Bishop of Gibraltar, which was printed in *The East and the West*, April, 1904, pp. 121-142, and contains versions of Wadding's text of the letters of John of Monte Corvino and Andrew, which are more correct than those made by Colonel Yule. Wadding's transcript was unfortunately very far from accurate, and his errors have been constantly repeated and perpetuated until to-day. The mistakes occur for the most part where the MS. is a little difficult to read; others are due to slips or perhaps to misprints, as for example when the number of boys whom John had purchased is given as *cl* instead of the original *xl*; and at least one alteration may be thought to be deliberate. Andrew wrote with great candour "*sed baptizati non recte incedunt per viam Christianitatis*", but Wadding prints "*sed multi ex baptizatis non recte etc.*"

Of the life of John and his companions, "whose names are worthy of immortality" as Raynaldus says, very little is known. From his own letters we gather that John was born at Monte Corvino in 1246 or 1247. An obscure passage of John of Florence (de' Marignolli) says that he began life as a "soldier, judge, and teacher of the Emperor Frederick",¹ who died A.D. 1250! About the year 1280,

¹ *Monumenta Historica Boemiarum*, tom. ii, 1768, p. 85: qui primo miles, iudex & doctor *Friderici* Imperatoris post lxxii annos factus frater Minor. The learned editor (G. Dobner) says that John of Monte Corvino must be the same as John of Plano Carpinus, who was in Central Asia in the middle of the thirteenth century, and it is possible that this strange confusion existed also in the mind of John of Florence. Colonel Yule writes in *Cathay* (vol. i, p. 166) that John, already a Franciscan, was sent by Michael Palæologus as a messenger to Gregory X in 1272. His authority is no doubt Wadding (*Annal. Min.*, tom. iv, p. 345 (an. 1272)), who says: *Opportune tandem supervenit ex eodem Ordine [Minorum] Joannes de Monte Corvino (quod oppidum est in Apulia Daunia) missus ab Imperatore litteris & verbo, Gregorii assumptioni gratulaturus, dolorem item expressurus, quod eum videre non licuerit antequam e Syria regrederetur, & impense Imperatoris nomine acturus*

at any rate, John was sent as a missionary to the East, with several companions, by Bonagratia,¹ Minister General of the Order of Minor Friars. He seems to have spent the time partly at least in Persia, and certainly did not then reach China. He returned with letters from Arghun, Khan of Persia (August, 1284 – March, 1291), in 1289, and was at once sent back by the Pope,² whose letters are dated 15 July, 1289. Apart from what we are told in John's own letters there is little more to say of him. Odoric, who saw him near the end of his life, mentions him, but not by name, in the following words: Nous avons un nostre frère meneur évesque en l'ostel de l'empereur qui tousdis donne la beneicon au grant Caan quant il doit chevauchier. Je frère Odric voulz aller avec pour veoir la guise et il m'y mena. Nous alames a procession contre l'empereur qui scoit en un char et portames devant nous une croix sur un hault baston affin que on la puist mieulx veoir et chantames ceste antene: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*.³ And *The Book of the Estate of the Great Khan* also, written

de repetita toties unione Ecclesiarum: cujus demum verbis tamquam ex ipsius Imperatoris ore prolatis, plenam adhiberi fidem in epistola rogabat.

As to John's birth-place, Wadding says he knew of no evidence to decide between Monte Corvino "in Apulia Daunia situm" and "nobilius oppidum Montis Corvini non longe a Salerno" (*Ann. Min.*, tom. vi, p. 94). But from the passage quoted above and from another (tom. v, p. 194) where he says: Monte Corvino (quod oppidum haud ignobile est in Apulia Daunia, non longe a Luceria civitate, juxta latus Apennini, versus Orientem), he seems to have preferred the claims of Apulia. Montecorvino, about 19 km. east of Salerno, is marked in Stieler's *Handatlas*, 1907, No. 25, and under the name of Rovella in *Andrees Allgemeiner Handatlas*, 1899, No. 103/4, but I have not found the Apulian Monte Corvino on any map, though its position may be judged from that of Luceria or Lucera.

¹ Frater Bonagratia de Sancto Ioanne in Persiceto was elected to be Minister General at Whitsuntide, 1279, and died at Avignon on Sunday, October 3, 1283. Cf. *Annales Minorum*, tom. v, pp. 72, 127; *Bullarium Franciscanum*, tom. iii, pp. 191 (c), 417 (a), 501 (b).

² Nicholas IV, the first Minor Friar to be made Pope. He was elected 20 February, 1288, and crowned on the 25th of the same month.

³ *Les voyages . . . du frère Odoric*, ed. H. Cordier, 1891, p. 375.

about the year 1330, gives us some account of him in this passage which we quote in full:—

En la ditte cite de cambalech fu uns archeuesques qui auoit nom frere iehan du mont curuin de lordre des freres meneurs. et y estoit legas enuoiez du pappe clement. cilz arceuesques fist en celle cite dessus ditte trois lieux de freres meneurs et sont bien deux lieues loings ly uns de lautre. il en fist aussy deux autres en la cite de racon [Zaitun] qui est bien loings de cambalech le voiage de trois mois et est dencoste la mer. esquelz deux lieux furent deux freres meneurs euesques. ly uns eut nom frere andrieu de paris. et ly autres ot nom frere pierre de florense. cilz freres iehans larceuesque conuerty la moult de gens a la foy ihesucrist. il est homs de tres honneste vie et agreable a dieu et au monde et tres bien auoit la grace de lempereur. ly empereres lui faisoit tousiours et a toute sa gent aministrer toutes leurs neccessitez. et moult le amoient tous crestiens et paiens. et certes il eust tout ce pays conuerty a la foy crestienne et catholique. se ly nestorin faulx crestiens et mescreans ne le eussent empechiet et nuist. ly dis arceuesques ot grant paine pour ces nestorins ramener a la obediencie de nostre mere sainte eglise de romme. sans laquelle obediencie il disoit que ilz ne pouuoient estre sauue. et pont ceste cause ces nestorin scismat auoient grant enuie sur lui. cilz arceuesques comme il plot a dieu est nouvellement trespassez de ce siècle. a son obseque et a son sepulture vinrent tres grant multitude de gens crestiens et de paiens. et desciroient ces paiens leurs robes de dueil. ainsi que leur guise est. et ces gens crestiens et paiens pristrent en grant deuocion des draps de larceuesque. et le tinrent à grant reuerence et pour relique. la fu il enseuelis moult honnourablement a la guise des fiable-crestiens. encore uisete on le lieu de sa sepulture a moult grant deuocion.¹ And, again, further on: et quant cilz

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, sér. II, tom. vi, 1830, pp. 68, 69.

arceuesques dont par cy deuant auons parle ediffia ces abbaies des freres meneurs dessus dittes. cil nestorin de nuit le destruisoient. et y faisoient tout le mal que ilz pouuoient. car ilz ne osoient audit arceuesque ne a ses freres ne aux autres fiable crestiens mal faire en publique ne en appert pour ce que ly empereres les amoit et leur monstroit signe damour. ces nestorins sont plus de trente mille demourans on dit empire de cathay. et sont tres riche gent.¹

Once more we hear of the great Archbishop in a letter addressed to the Pope by certain chiefs of the Alani who held posts in the Mongol-Chinese government. This letter is dated 11 July, 1336, and says: "Let this moreover be known to your Holiness that for a long time we were instructed in the Catholic faith, with wholesome guidance and abundant consolation, by your legate Brother John, a valiant, capable, and holy man, who nevertheless died eight years ago."² This passage would fix the date of John's death in the year 1328 or 1329, and although it is placed by modern writers in 1330 or 1333,³ we know of no evidence inconsistent with the earlier date.

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, sér. II, tom. vi, 1830, pp. 69, 70. *fiable* is the modern *fidèle*.

² *Annales Minorum*, tom. vii, pp. 209, 210. Hoc autem sanctitati vestre sit notum, quod longo tempore fuimus informati in fide Catholica, & salubriter gubernati, et consolati plurimum per Legatum vestrum fratrem Joannem, valentem, sanctum, & sufficientem virum, qui tamen mortuus est ante octo annos. Cf. *Cathay*, etc., vol. ii, p. 314.

³ Mortuo sub hoc tempore [anno mcccxxxiii] optimo viro & vere Evangelico Ministro Joanne de Monte Corvino primo Archiepiscopo Cambalien. in Dominio, & Emporio Tartarorum, ejus unius opera conversa sunt ad veram fidem plusquam triginta millia Sarracenorum, teste beato Oderico de Foro-Julio . . . maturo consilio . . . substituitur hoc anno frater Nicolaus Minorita . . . datisque . . . viginti Fratribus Sacerdotibus, & sex laicis . . . (*Ann. Min.*, tom. vii, p. 138).

Ecce igitur nos . . . venerabilem fratrem nostrum Nicolaum Archiepiscopum Cambaliensem Ordinis Fratrum Minorum . . . providius destinandum. . . . Data Avenione Kalend. Octobris anno xviii [1 October, 1333] (*ibid.*, p. 139). This is an extract from the letter of commendation sent with Nicholas, the successor of John of Monte Corvino, to the great Khan. On pp. 456, 457 of the same tome Wadding

In 1307 the Pope sent seven more Minor Friars to act as suffragans to John after they had consecrated him Archbishop of Khanbalig or Peking. Five only of their names are given in the text below (pp. 559, 567), but the full list is given by Wadding as follows: Gerardus, Peregrinus, Andreas de Perusio sacrae Theologiae Lector, Nicolaus de Bantra sive de Apulia, Minister Provinciae Sancti Francisci, Petrus de Castello, Andrutius de Assisio, Guillelmus de Franchya sive de Villa longa aut Villanova. Sbaralea gives six names—Andreas de Perusio, Nicolaus de Bantia, Gerardus Albuinis, Ulricus de Seyfridsdorf, Peregrinus de Castello, Guilelmus de Villanova, omitting Petrus and Andrutius and substituting for one of them Ulricus.¹ To these seven, of whom not more than three or four reached China, three more were added a few years later, namely, Peter of Florence (who has been mentioned above, p. 538), created Bishop on 20 December, 1310, and Jerome and Thomas on 19 February, 1311.² Into the very meagre later history of the Mission, ending with the murder of James of Florence, Archbishop of Zaitun³, in

prints the Pope's mandate to Nicholas dated Avenione xiv. Kal. Oct. an. xviii (18 September, 1333). News of Nicholas' arrival at Almalig had reached Europe in 1338, in which year he is said to have died; he had certainly not reached Khanbalig in June, 1336.

¹ *Annales Minorum*, tom. vi, pp. 92, 94; *Bullarium Franciscanum*, tom. v, pp. 38, 39.

² *Annales Minorum*, tom. vi, pp. 467-9.

³ "Hoc eodem anno frater Jacobus de Florentia Archiepiscopus Zaitonensis, & frater Guillelmus Campanus Minoritæ pro fidei Christianæ confessione occisi sunt a Sarracenis in Medorum imperio, & alii duo ejusdem Instituti in odium nominis Romani interempti sunt ab hæreticis Nestorinis" (*Ann. Min.*, tom. viii, p. 154 [an. 1302], with marginal reference to *Marian. citat.* and *Chron. antiq.*). Marian. is Marianus Florentinus, of whose works Wadding has the following notices: *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, Rome, 1650, p. 249, "MARIANVS FLORENTINVS . . . Scripsit Fasciculus Chronicarum Ordinis Minorum. Libris quinque opus distinxit. Autographum penes me est, magnoque fuit adiumento Annalibus scribendo." *Ibid.*, Index Materialium, p. xxxvii, "Mariani Florentini. Fasciculus Chronicorum Ordinis Minorum. Catalogus piorum Laicorum eiusdem Ordinis. Catalogus illustrium Fæminarum Ordinis

1362, we cannot enter here, and I proceed at once to give a transcript of such passages bearing directly on our subject as are to be found in those pages of the old Paris MS. which I have been able to examine, together with an English version, prefixing extracts from some of the letters carried by John of Monte Corvino in 1289, which have been copied from other sources.¹

S. Claræ. Catalogus virorum illustrium Tertij Ordinis. (p. xlj) *Historia Montis Alvernæ.* The *Fasciculus*, which was not (in 1900) known to be extant, was a history of the Order from its foundation down to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The account of James' martyrdom seems to have been in lib. iv, c. 13. Marianus died while nursing the plague patients at Florence in 1523 or 1527. Cf. *Collection d'études et de documents sur l'histoire du Moyen Age*, tom. ii, Paris, 1900, pp. 137 sqq.

"IACOBVS de FLORENTIA, Archiepiscopus Zaitonensis, & frater Gulielmus Campanus pro fidei Christianæ confessione in Medorum imperio à Saracenis intercepti sunt, cum aliis duobus Minoritis. vide Tom. 4. Annal. 1362. num. 4. . . .

"THOMAS TOLENTINAS, Iacobus de Padua, & De metrius laicus, anno 1321. die 13. Aprilis, apud Thamnam Saracenorum ciuitatem plurimis pro Christi fide tormentis toleratis, ac superatis, victores migrarunt in cælum" (*Scriptores Ord. Min.*, Appendix (not paged), Martyres Ordinis Minorum). In the *Index nationum* is the entry, under *Itali*, "Iacobus de Florentia, in Oriente." The place of James' martyrdom, here vaguely called "the East", and in the passages above "the Empire of the Medes", must have been not at Zaitun but somewhere in Central Asia, "*Medorum imperio*" being, as Colonel Yule pointed out, a mistake probably for "*medio imperio*", the Middle Kingdom, not of China but of the house of Chagatai.

¹ In printing the various texts I have tried to copy the originals literally and exactly, with the exception that the abbreviated words of the MS. are printed out in full. While I remain responsible for all mistakes which may be found, I am very greatly indebted not only to the Librarians at the Bibliothèque Nationale but to many friends in England for help in various points, and especially to the unsurpassed scholarship and kindness of Mr. C. W. Moule, President of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who has corrected and revised all the English versions, and lastly to the late Colonel Sir H. Yule, to whom, directly or indirectly, almost every statement and every reference in this article is owed. The Editor and printers have earned my best thanks by the wonderful patience and accuracy with which they have helped me in a troublesome piece of work. The Roman numbers in the margin are intended to make reference from the Latin to the corresponding place in the English version more easy.

LATIN TEXTS

- I. (Cobyla Cham, magno Principi Tartarorum Illustri gratiam in præsentī, quæ perducatur ad gloriam in futuro.

Gaudemus in Domino, Princeps egregie, sibi que devotas, & uberes gratiarum referimus actiones, quod ipse in cujus manu corda sunt Principum terrenorum, te prout lætanter audivimus, suæ dono gratiæ clementi pietate præveniens, illo tui pectoris intima fœcundavit affectu, quod ad Christianitatis terminos ampliandos dirigitur desiderium mentis tuæ. Dudum siquidem post nostræ promotionis initia, certos Nuntios ad nostram præsentiam ex parte Magnifici Principis Argonis Regis Tartarorum Illustris transmissos recepimus, nobis apertius referentes, quod ad personam nostram, & Romanam Ecclesiam, & etiam gentem, seu populum Latinorum grandis devotionis affectum Magnificencia tua gerit, dictique Nuntii ex parte regia cum instantia petierunt, ut aliquos religiosos Latinos ad tuam præsentiam mitteremus. Nos autem tam gratis & acceptis de tanto, tanque sublimi Principe rumoribus intellectis, exultavimus in Domino vehementer, cum tuæ salutis augmentum, tuique nominis gloriam sinceris affectibus cupiamus, Patri luminum, a quo est omne datum optimum, & omne donum perfectum, humiliter supplicantes, ut tui pectoris intima de bono semper in melius munere suæ inspirationis illuminet, & suæ gratiæ rore perfundat ad laudem sui gloriosi nominis & honorem. Volentes igitur votis regiis benigne annuere in hac parte, ac desiderantes admodum, ut ad suscipiendam Christianam fidem, quam prædicta tenet & servat Ecclesia, promptus accedas, præsto te offeras, studiosius occurras, cum sine ipsius comitante suffragio placere Altissimo nemo possit: Ecce dilectum filium fratrem Joannem de Monte Corvino, cum ejus sociis de Ordine Minorum latorem præsentium ad te duximus destinandum, cum instantia postulantes ut ipsum & socios supradictos benigne habeas commendatos,

eis, quorum doctrinæ, cum salutis commoda suggerat, te inseparabiliter cupimus adhærere, super salubri commissio illis negotio, quod salutem respicit animarum, Regii favoris auxilium impensurus, ut ejus fulti præsidio utilius & efficacius habere se valeant in eodem, tuque a Domino, qui pro minimis grandia recompensat, æternæ beatitudinis præmia consequaris. Datum Reate III. Idus Julii, anno II.¹

II. (Nobili viro Jolo de Pisis.

Lætamur in Domino, quod sicut habet fide digna relatio, ad dilatandos Christianæ fidei terminos laudabiliter & solerter intendens, illos ad agnitionem ipsius, qui nondum sunt ejus lumine illustrati, sollicitè inducendo, quodque cunctis religiosis per partes ipsas habentes transitum impendis intuitu Jesu Christi consilium, auxilium, & favorem, exhibendo te nihilominus illis specialem, & præcipuum protectorem, de quo tuæ laudandæ sollicitudinis studium tanto amplius commendamus, quanto magis salutem appetimus singulorum. Excitamus itaque diligentiam tuam, & hortamur in Domino Jesu Christo, quatenus circa hujusmodi salubres tuos actus & opera sedula, sollicitudinis studium largiaris, ut exinde tanto acceptior, & gratior tuo reddi valeas salvatori, quanto per te plures ab erroris invio ad veritatis semitam, & ab infidelitatis nubilo ad claritatem Catholicæ fidei reducentur. Nos autem benedictionem nostram tibi tenore præsentium in tuorum remissionem dirigimus peccatorum. Datum ut supra.²

III. (Argoni Regi Tartarorum Illustri gratiam in præsentì, quæ perducatur ad gloriam in futuro.

. . . Sane dilectus filius frater Joannes de Monte Corvino, de Ordine Minorum, lator præsentium, ad nostram de Orientalibus partibus præsentiam veniens, attentæ relationis officio nostro Apostolatui patefecit, quod tu . . . erga nos & Romanam Ecclesiam, ac etiam

¹ *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, pp. 196, 197; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 55, fol. 314 r°.

² *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, p. 198.

alias Christianorum Ecclesias, magnæ devotionis geris affectum. Adjecit etiam dictus Frater, quod sibi, ejusque sociis, dum in tuis partibus morarentur Christi prosequentes obsequia, humanitatem grandem . . . tua clementer exhibuit magnitudo. . . . Porro, princeps egregie, sicut magnificentiæ regiæ per alias nostras litteras, tibi, per venerabilem fratrem nostrum Roban Barsamma, in partibus Orientis episcopum, & nonnullos tuos nuncios ad nos missos, duximus intimandum, nos, qui, quamvis insufficientibus meritis, vicarii Christi sumus & Petri Apostolorum principis successores, quam plurimum cupinus & ardenti desiderio affectamus, ut quos baptismatis unda non diluit & fidei Christianæ religio non includit, erroris invio, per quod gressibus periculosos oberrant, omnino relicto, ad rectitudinis semitam revocentur & fidem servant fideliter supradictam. . . .

Cæterum prælibatum fratrem Joannem, & ejus socios ad partes ipsas salubre prosequuturos negotium quod cœperunt fiducialiter remittentes, instanter exposcimus, ut eos, intuitu Dei & ob reverentiam Apostolicæ Sedis & nostram, benigne habeas commendatos, eis super hujusmodi exequutione negotii favorem regiam impensurus, cujus fulti præsidio utilius & efficacius se habere valeant in hac parte; quodque aliquos ex ipsis tecum jugiter teneas qui tibi tuoque proponant populo verbum Dei, & de salute tractare valeant animarum. Datum Reate Idibus Julii, anno II.¹

IV. (*Venerabili fratri . . . , patriarche Nestorianorum, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.*

. . . Ideoque fraternitatem tuam paternis exhortamur affectibus ut in filio Dei patris tibi sinceris mentibus suademus, quatenus ad observandam fidem catholicam, quam sicut premittitur tenet et servat romana ecclesia inconcusse, ac etiam ad ipsius ecclesie unionem, sublato

¹ *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, pp. 195, 196; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 54, fol. 313 rº.

eujuslibet tarditatis obstaculo et nexibus difficultatis effractis festinus acceleres . . . eo majoris retributionis premia proinde consecuturus a Domino quo plures ad id tuo exemplo laudabili evocabis, cum facile trahi soleat in exemplum a subditis quod agi conspicitur a prelatiis.

Speramus etenim magnaue fiducia ducimur quod premissa libenter et efficaciter adimplebis, subjectum tibi populum ad ea diligenter et sollicite inducendo, cum sicut (*sic*) dilectus filius frater Johannes de Montecorvino, de ordine fratrum minorum, lator presentium, multa bona multaque laudabilia opera, que letanter audivimus, de tuis studiis nobis duxerit referenda. Suscipe igitur reverenter exhortationem sinceram et salubrem devotus amplectere Christi vicarii suadelam, sic te laudabiliter gerere studeas ad honorem et gloriam omnium conditoris ut in conspectu ejus reddaris acceptior cumulo meritorum. Ceterum instanter expetimus ut eundem fratrem et ejus socios spetialiter habeas commendatos, ipsosque benigne ac favorabiliter prosequaris, ut, tali et tanto muniti presidio, utilius et commodius in ministerio se gerere valeant quod exercent et ad laudem divini nominis opera efficacius prosequi Jesu Christi. . . .

Dat. Reate, idibus julii, anno secundo.)¹

Bibliothèque Nationale.

MS. Latin 5006, fol. 170 v^o, col. 2.

V. de noua ecclesia in tartaria fundata et plantata.

Tempore etiam huius Clementis² pape. felix novitas et bona nuntiatio ab interiori yndia et regnis orientalibus. in partibus occidentibus et in ytaliam venit et latinorum corda. et ffratrum minorum et predicatorum clericorum et religiosorum. principum et prelatorum corda gaudio et ammiratione repleuit.

¹ Chabot, *Hist. de Mar Jabalaha III*, pp. 218, 219; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 48, fol. 312 r^o.

² Clement V was elected 5 June, 1305, crowned 14 November, 1305 (1306 is his *annus primus*), and died 20 April, 1314.

Nam frater Johannes de monte coruino de ordine fratrum minorum. beati ffrancisisci deuotus ymitator in se ipso rigidus et seuerus. et in uerbo dej docendo et predicando facundus. A domino Nicholao papa quarto: auctoritate magna et priuilegijs gratiosis fultus. ad predicandos infideles iter aggressus regnum persarum intrauit. et in ciuitate maxima Thaurisio¹ aliquamdiu conmoratus cum fratribus minoribus et predicatoribus. qui ibj in uno loco morabantur fidem xpisti gentibus predicantes. et battizantes. Ipse frater Johannes cum eis per dies pluros stetit: de inde in yndiam penetrauit. Cuius iter et sanctum opus in ista sua epistola declaratur que talis est. epistola fratris Iohannis. legati pape.

VI. **E**go frater Johannes de monte Coruino de ordine fratrum minorum. recessi de thaurisio ciuitate persarum. Anno dominij .m^o. cc^o. lxxxvj^o. et intraui in indiam. et fui in contrada yndie. et in ecclesia sancti thome Apostoli mensibus .xiiij. Et ibj batticzaui circa centum personas in diuersis locis. et Socius fuit vie mee ffrater Nicholaus de pystorio de ordine fratrum predicatorum. Qui mortuus est ibj et sepultus in eadem ecclesia. Et ego ulterius procedens perueni in Katay regnum Imperatoris Tartarorum qui dicitur magnus Cham². Jpsum uero Imperatorem cum litteris dominij pape ad fidem domini nostrj Jhsuxpisti catholicam inuitauj. Qui tamen nimis inueteratus est in ydolatria. set multa beneficia prestat xpistianis. et ego sum apud eum iam est annus duodecimus. Nestorianj quidem xpistianitatis tytulum preferentes Set a xpistiana

¹ Tauris, or Tabriz, in Persia.

² John must have reached Khanbalig in 1294, after the death of Kubilai. When Kubilai died on 18 February, 1294, his successor, Temur or Ch'eng Tsung, was absent in the north. He reached Shang-tu (the northern summer capital) on 28 April and was enthroned there on 10 May, but does not seem to have come to Khanbalig until 21 October, 1294 (cf. *Yüan Shih*, c. xviii, ff. 1 r^o, 3 v^o). John may have gone to the Khan at Shang-tu, as Marco Polo had done, or may have seen him first in October or November, on his return to Khanbalig. In any case, Khanbalig is the city referred to in the course of his letters.

religione plurimum deuiantes tantum inualuerunt in partibus istis. quod non permiserunt quempiam xpistianum alterius ritus habere quantu[m]libet paruum oratorium. nec aliam quam Nestorianj publicare doctrinam. Ad has siquidem terras nec aliquis apostolus. nec apostolorum discipulus peruenit.¹ Et ideo prefati Nestorinj per se et per alios pecunia corruptos persecutiones mihi grauissimas intulerunt. asserentes quod non essem missus a domino papa. Set essem explorator magnus et dementatorum hominum. et facto aliquanto interuallo temporis produxerunt alios falsos testes dicentes [fol. 171 r°] quod alius nuntius fuerit missus deferens imperatori maximom thesaurum. et quod ego illum occiderim. in yndia et abstulerim que portabat. Et durauit hec machynatio circiter quinque annis. Jta quod sepe ad iuditium fuj tractus cum ignominia mortis. Tandem per quorundam confessionem deo disponente Jmperator congronuit meam innocentiam et malitiam emulorum et ipsos cum uxoribus et liberis exilio religauit.

Ego uero solus in hac peregrinatione fuj sine confessione annis undecim. donec uenit ad me frater Arnoldus alamannus de prouincia colonie nunc est annus secundus. vnā ecclesiam edificauj in ciuitate Cambaliech ubj est precipua residentia regis quam ante sex annos compleuj. vbj etiam feci campanile et ibj tres campanas posuj. Battizauj etiam ibidem ut extimo usque hodie circa sex milia personarum. Et nisi fuissent supradicte infamationes batticzassem ultra .xxx. milia. et sum frequenter in batticizando. Item emj successiue .xl. pueros filios paganorum etatis infra .vij. et .xj. annorum qui nullam adhuc cognoscebant legem. et battizauj eos et informauj eos litteris latinis et ritu nostro. et scripssi pro eis psalteria cum ymnarijs .xxx. et duo breuiaria. Cum quibus .xj.

¹ This sentence, coming from one who had spent a year at the Church of St. Thomas in India, has an interesting bearing on the question of the date at which the legend of St. Thomas' mission to China originated. Cf. pp. 568, 569 below.

pueri iam sciunt offitium nostrum et tenent chorum et edomadas sicut in conuentu siue sim presens siue non et plures ex eis scribunt psalteria et alia opportuna. Et dominus imperator delectatur multum in cantu eorum Campanas ad omnes horas pulso. et cum conuentu infantium atque lactantium diuinum offitium facio. tamen secundum usum cantamus quia notatum offitium non habemus. de bono Rege Georgio.¹

¹ King George is a person of great interest, well known to readers of Marco Polo, who, like John of Monte Corvino, calls him a descendant of Prester John. He was in fact chieftain of a quite different tribe, the Onguts, called in Chinese 汪古 Wang-ku or 白達達 Pai Ta-ta, "White Tartars," who inhabited the country about the great northern reach of the Ho or Yellow River. Through this territory John might have passed, as Marco Polo did (calling it Tenduc, i.e. 天德 T'ien-tê), on his way to the Mongol court, and so have made friends with King George before he had aroused the hostility of the Nestorians at Khanbalig; but Colonel Yule had very good ground for his view that he came from India by sea. We hear of King George's father and uncle, Künbuga and Aïbuga, as the governors of the city of Koshang in that most interesting but little-known book *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III*, translated from the Syriac by Dr. J.-B. Chabot (p. 19). They are there described as sons-in-law of the Khan (*Khoubilai* is Dr. Chabot's not quite accurate addition), and Marco Polo states that the family had an hereditary right to marry a princess of the Imperial family (George himself had married two princesses, a granddaughter of Kubilai and a daughter of Temur). This statement of these two contemporary Western authors is exactly confirmed by the Chinese histories, which also tell us of George's pathetic death. He had been taken prisoner in 1298. The Khan sent an envoy to obtain his release, but while the king was in the act of asking this envoy about the welfare of his wives and of his infant son he was hurried away and never seen again. George was succeeded by his brother 朮忽難 Chu-hu-nan. The biographies of 愛不花 Ai-pu-hua and 君不花 Chün-pu-hua (as well as of their father and grandfather), 闊里吉思 K'o-li-chi-ssü (Gorgis or George) and his son 朮安 Chu-an (John), will be found in the *Yüan Shih*, c. cxviii, ff. 4 v^o - 6 r^o; cf. cc. cviii, cix, also. The identification of Marco Polo's Tenduc (the city), Koshang of the Syriac history, and the unnamed place in which we are told below that King George built a church, is extremely difficult. The most important city in the neighbourhood was 大同 Ta-t'ung, at that time known as 西京 Hsi-ching (William of Rubruquis' Segin) or the Western Capital, and the fact that William describes Segin as the see of a Nestorian Bishop is perhaps significant. Colonel Yule, who does not seem to have

Quidam Rex illius regionis. de septa nestorianorum xpistianorum. qui erat de genere illius magnj Regis qui dictus fuit presbiter Johannes de yndia. primo anno quo huc ego ueni mihi adhesid. et ad ueritatem uere fidei catholice per me conuersus minores ordines suscepit mihi-que celebranti sacris uestibus indutus ministravit. Ita quod alij nestorianj ipsum de Apostasia accusauerunt. tamen ipse magnam populi suj partem ad ueram fidem catholicam adduxit. Et ecclesiam puleram secundum Regiam magnificentiam construxit. ad honorem dej nostrj sancte trinitatis; et dominj pape. et nomen meum vocans eam ecclesiam Romanam. Qui Rex Georgius ante .xj. annos migravit ad dominum uerus xpistianus. relicto filio herede in cunabulis qui nunc est annorum nouem. ffrares tamen ipsius Regis Georgij cum essent perfidi in erroribus Nestorij omnes quos ille conuerterat post Regis obitum sub uerterunt: ad scisma pristinum reducendo. Et quia ego [171 r^o, col. 2] fui solus nec potui recedere ab Imperatore Chaan ire non potui ad illam ecclesiam que distat ad .xx. dietas. Tamen si uenerint aliquj boni coadiutores et cooperatores spero in deo quod totum poterit reformari. Nam adhuc habeo priuilegium predicti Regis Georgij defunctj.

Iterum dico quod si non fuissent infamationes supradicte magnus fructus fuisset sequutus. Si habuissem etiam duos uel tres socios coadiutores meos. et forte Imperator Chaan fuisset battizatus. Rogo ut tales fratres ueniant.

considered the fact that King George's capital is called Tendue by Marco Polo and must necessarily have been ignorant of the Syriac Koshang, says that King George's Church was "probably in Tathung [Ta-t'ung]". The confusion between King George and Prester John is commonly ascribed to the likeness between Wang-ku (Ongut) and 王罕 Wang-han (Ung Khan, or Prester John); but it is to be observed that there was also some connexion between the two tribes. M. H. Cordier, who has kindly allowed me to see rough proofs of the new edition of *Cathay*, says that a branch of the old Kerait still occupies the country adjoining Ta-t'ung, and a Chinese author (*Yüan ch'ao pi shih chü*, 1903, c. viii, fol. 6 v^o, note) says that "the Ongut tribe was formerly subject to the Kerait tribe".

si uenire aliqui uolunt quod studeant se in exemplum dare. et non suas finbrias magnificare. **D**e uia notifico quod per terram Cothay¹ Imperatoris aquilonarium tartarorum est via breuior et securiorum. Ita quod cum nuntijs. infra .v. uel .vj. menses poterunt peruenire. via autem alia est longissima et periculosissima habens duas navigationes. Quarum prima est secundum distantiam inter Achon et prouinciam prouincie. Alia uero est secundum distantiam inter Achon et Angliam. et posset contingere quod in biennio uix perficerent uiam illam. Quia prima via segura non fuit a multo tempore propter guerras. Ideo sunt .xij. annj. quod de curia Romana et de nostro ordine et statu occidentis non suscepi noua.² Iam sunt duo annj quod uenit quidam medicus Cyrugicus lombardus qui de Romana curia et nostro ordine et statu occidentis istas partes incredibilibus blasfemijs infecit. propter quod multum dessidero percipere ueritatem.

Rogo fratres ad quos hec littera peruenerit ut ita studeant quod eius continentia possid peruenire ad notitiam domini pape et cardinalium et procuratoris ordinis nostri in curia Romana. **M**inistro generali ordinis nostrj supplico pro antiphonario et legendis sanctorum. graduali et psalterio cum nota. pro exemplari quia non habeo nisi breuiarium portatile cum lectionibus breuibz et paruum missale. Si habuero exemplar. puerj predicti scribent.

¹ Wadding transcribed this word *Gothorum*, and, in the second letter, *Kathan*. It probably stands (as M. Pelliot suggests) for Marco Polo's Toctai, the Chinese 脱脱 T'o-t'o, descended from Chingis' eldest son 术赤 Chu-ch'ih, Khan of Kipchak, whose capital was at Saraï on the Volga, north of the Caspian Sea. Cf. *Marco Polo*, vol. i, pp. 5, 72; vol. ii, p. 492, etc.; *Yüan Shih*, c. cvii, fol. 5 r°. Toctai seems to have been Khan A.D. 1291-1312; cf. Bretschneider, *JNCBRAS.*, 1876, p. 180.

² A sentence should begin at *Quia prima* and end with *suscepi noua*. "Because the first road has not been safe . . . therefore it is twelve years . . ." Colonel Yule, misled by Wadding's punctuation, took it to mean that the missionaries must after all come by the second, tedious route, because the first was not open, and then began a new paragraph: "It is twelve years . . ."

Modo sum in actu hedificandi aliam ecclesiam ad diuidendum pueros in pluribus locis. Ego iam Senuj et canus factus sum potius laboribus et tribulationibus quam etate. sum enim annorum . quinquaginta octo. Didici conpetenter linguam et litteram Tartaricham que lingua usualis Tartarorum. et iam transtuli in lingua illa et littera totum nouum testamentum et psalterium que feci scribj in pulcerrima littera eorum. et teneo et lego et predico in patenti et manifesto quasi in testimonium legis xpisti. Et tractauj cum supradicto Rege Georgio si uixisset totum officium latinum transferre. ut per totam terram cantaretur in dominio suo. et eo uiuente in ecclesia sua celebrabatur missa secundum ritum latinum [fol. 171 r^o] in littera et lingua illa tam uerba canonis quam prefationes.¹ Et filius dicti Regis uocatur Johannes propter nomen meum. et spero in deo quod ipse imitabitur uestigia patris suj. Secundum uero audita et uisa credo quod nullus Rex nec princeps in mundo possid equari domino Chaan in latitudine terre in multitudine populi et magnitudine diuitiarum. finis. Data. in ciuitate Cambaliech Regni Katay. anno dominj m^o. ccc v^o. die viij. mensis Januarij.

VII. **H**is litteras transmisit frater Johannes predictus legatus apostolice sedis. Cujdam fratrij predicatori viro spirituali. qui circa partes orientis peregrinabatur gentibus predicando fidem xpisti. Per mercatores uenetianos qui a Tartaria redierunt Et dederunt predicto fratri predicatori in signum ueritatis tabulam magnj Chaan imperatoris. Et ipse frater transmisit eam in pluribus locis citra mare fratribus minoribus et predicatoribus. Et significauit ipse frater. quod plures fratres predicatorum qui litteras latinas. Grecas. Tartaricas et linguas optime didicerant. et adire Tartariam superiorem properauerunt portantes libros calices

¹ As lately as in the seventeenth century (January 25, 1615) permission was given to the Jesuits to celebrate Mass in the Chinese language. Cf. Havret, *La Stèle Chrétienne de Si-nyan-sou*, pt. ii, p. 57, n. 3.

et paramenta. Et fratres predicti ceperunt uiam et peruenerunt usque gazariam¹ Tartarorum aquilonarium. set non potuerunt transire propter Guerras. vnde in eadem ciuitate remanserunt predicantes et batticzantes gentes ibidem. quousque Guerra cessaret. Epistola fratris Johannis legati pape. in tartaria. archiepiscopo

VIII. **R**enerendo in xpisto Patri . . ffratrj . ffratrj . vicario Generalis ministrj ordinis fratrum minorum. Et vicario fratrum et Magistri ordinis predicatorum. et fratribus ordinum utriusque in prouincia persarum manentibus. ffrater Johannes de monte Coruino de ordine fratrum minorum. Inutilis xpisti seruus. predicator fidej sacre xpistiane. legatus et nuntius sedis apostolice Romane. Salutem et caritatem in eo qui est uera caritas et salus omnium. Ordo exigit caritatis ut longe lateque distantes et maxime qui peregrinantur pro lege xpisti. cum reuelata facie se inuicem uidere non possunt saltem uerbis et litteris consolentur. Cogitauj uos non sine causa mirarj quod tot annis in prouincia tam longinqua consistens nunquam meas litteras recepistis. Set miratus sum non minus quod nunquam nisi anno isto recepi ab aliquo fratre uel amico litteram uel salutationem. nec uidetur quod aliquis recordatus fuerit mej. et maxime quia audiuj quod rumores ad uos peruenissent quod [171 v^o, col. 2] ego mortuus essem. Nunc autem notifico uobis quod anno preterito in principio Januarij per quendam amicum nostrum qui fuit ex Sotijs domini Cothay Canis. qui uenerunt ad dominum Chanem de Cathay. ego misi litteras Patri vicario et fratribus prouincie gazarie de statu et conditione mea in paucis uerbis. in quibus litteris rogaui eundem vicarium quod exempla illarum uobis transmitterent[?]. Et iam mihi per bonas personas que nunc peruenerunt cum nuntijs predicti dominj Cothay ad

¹ Gazaria, or the Crimea.

dominum Chanem de Cathay. quod mee littere ad uos peruenerunt. et quod ille idem nuntius qui portauit litteras meas post modum de Sara ciuitate uenit thaurisium. propter quod de factis et contentis in illis litteris cogitauj non facere mentionem. nec iterato scribere Et primum est de persecutione Nestorianorum. Secundum de ecclesia et domibus completis. vj picturas feci fieri veteris et nouj testamenti. ad doctrinam rudium. et scripta sunt litteris latinis. Tursicis.¹ et persicis. ut omnes lingue legere ualeant. Tertium est quod ex pueris quos enj et battizauj aliqui migrauerunt ad dominum. Quartum est quod a tempore quo fui in tartaria in Kathay batticzauj . plura milia. In isto autem anno domini .m°. ccc. v°. Ego incepi unum alium locum nouum coram hostio domini Chanis. et inter Curiam et locum nostrum uia sola est distans per iactum lapidis a porta dominj Chanis.

Dominus Petrus de lucalongo fidelis xpistianus et Magnus Mercator qui fuit sotius meus de thaurisio ipse emit terram pro loco quem dixj. et dedit mihi amore dej. Et diuina gratia operante. quia utilior et congruentior locus haberi non posset in toto imperio dominj Chanis pro ecclesia catholica construenda. In principio augusti locum accepi. et assistantibus benefactoribus et iuuantibus. usque ad festum sancti ffrancisci² fuit completus. cum muro in

¹ Wadding read this word (perhaps rightly) *Tarsicis*. Tarsia is marked on the famous Catalan map. *Tarsā* appears to be a Persian word applied in contempt primarily to Christians but also to persons of other religions, so that *Tarsica lingua* might mean "the language of the idolaters", i.e. Mongol. From this word as applied to Christians is derived probably the term 迭屑 *Tieh-hsieh* by which Christians were known in the thirteenth century, and indeed until the seventeenth, when it appears in the form 特爾撒 *T'ê-êrh-sa* in Moslem books, and as *Terzai* in Trigault's *Christiana Expeditio*, p. 124.

² 4 October. The chronology is not perfectly clear. Colonel Yule supposed that the site was received in August, 1304, and that some building was begun at once, so that, speaking rather loosely, John was able to say in January, 1305, that he was in the act of building a new church; by 4 October, 1305, the buildings, including an oratory, were finished, but the principal church could not be completed until the

circuitu. et domibus officinis planis. et oratorio. quod est capax ducentarum personarum. Set propter yemem ecclesiam perficere non potuj. Set habeo ligna congregata in domo. et per misericordiam dej perficiam in estate. dico uobis quod mirum quoddam uisum est omnibus aduenientibus de ciuitate et aliunde, quia non habebant adhuc rumores ex hoc. et uidentes locum de nouo factum. et crucem rubeam de super in sublimj positam.

Et nos in oratorio nostro secundum usum offitium cantamus sollempniter quia notas non habemus Dominus Chaam in camera sua potest audire uoces nostras. et hoc mirabile factum longe lateque diuulgatum est inter gentes. Et pro magno erit. sicut disponet¹ [fol. 172 r°] et adimplebit diuina clementia :

A prima ecclesia et loco nostro. usque ad ecclesiam secundam quam edificauj postea sunt duo miliaria et dimidium intra ciuitatem. que multum est magna. Et pueros diuisi et posuj. partem in prima. et partem in secunda constituj. et fatiunt officium per se ipsos. Set ego sicut cappellanus per edomadas celebroy in utraque. quia puerj non sunt sacerdotes. de magno imperio tartarorum.

DE Regionibus orientalium uobis significo. et precipue de Imperio domini Chaanis. quod non sit ej maior in mundo. Et ego habeo in curia sua locum et uiam ordinariam intrandi et Sedendi. sicut legatus domini pape. et honorat me super omnes alios prelatos. quocumque nomine censeantur. Et licet ipse dominus Chaan audierit multa de curia Romana et statu latinorum dessiderat

summer of 1306. All building in Peking is stopped by the severe frost, which does not break until about the end of February. The fact that Quinquagesima fell on 5 March in 1307 precludes the simple solution of the difficulties which would be obtained by supposing that John dated his letters in the old style, saying 1305, 1306 where we should say 1306, 1307.

¹ In the margin below this column is written "per iactum unius baliste", intended no doubt to explain "per iactum lapidis" in the text above (p. 553).

tamen multum. uidere nuntios uenientes de partibus illis, In istis partibus sunt multe septe ydolatrarum diuersa credentium. et sunt multi religiosi de diuersis septis. diuersos habitus habentes. et sunt multo maioris austeritatis et obseruantie quam religiosi latinj

DE yndia maiorem partem ego uidi. et quesuij de alijs partibus indie. et esset magnus profectus predicare eis fidem xpisti si fratres uenirent. Set non essent mittendi nisi uirj Solidissinj. Nam Regiones sunt pulcerrime plene aromatibus. et lapidibus pretiosis. Set de fructibus nostris parum habent. Et propter magnam temperantiam et caliditatem aeris et regionis. Nudi uadunt. modico coopertorio uerenda cooperientes. Et propterea artibus nostris sartorum et cordonum. et artificijs non indigent. Jbj est semper estas et nunquam hyemps Battizauj ibj circa centum personas.

In eadem epistola¹ dicit ipse frater Johannes. quod sollempnes nuntij uenerunt ad

¹ Wadding separated the following paragraphs from the preceding by about twenty pages, and introduced them with a sentence which made Colonel Yule suppose that he (Wadding) considered them to be part of a third letter, whereas he himself perceived that they formed the end of the second letter. Wadding's words are: Ex nostris Scriptoribus nullus est qui exacte aut plena historia hujus optimi Viri assumptionem ad prædictum Archiepiscopatum, & res præclare gestas recenseat: solus inter omnes beatus Odericus de Foro-Julio in Chronicis, que a principio mundi, usque ad initium Pontificatus Benedicti XII. breui methodo concinnauit, largius de his tractauit, ex quo potiora hic exseribo: *Ultra ea que scripsit anno superiori frater Joannes a Monte Corvino, inquit beatus Odericus, hoc anno narrat in alia a se scripta Epistola quod solennes Nuntii uenerunt ad eum de quadam parte Aethiopiæ, rogantes, ut illuc pergeret etc.*: with the marginal reference:—B. Oder. ad an. 1306. This passage, with its definite quotation (*Ultra ea, etc.*) and marginal reference, is a rather serious objection to our supposition that the Paris MS. (Latin 5006) is the actual book which Wadding used. The words "ad an. 1306." refer back perhaps to the first part of the letter in Wadding's own *Annales*, tom. vi, pp. 71, 72. The passage just quoted is on p. 91. Monsieur H. Cordier tells me that he knows of no other copy of the Chronicles, but at the same time is inclined to doubt that the Paris MS. (Latin 5006) is the copy used by Wadding. I therefore give the variations between the MS. and Wadding's text which occur in that part of the first letter of which a facsimile

eum de eThyopia¹ rogantes ut illuc pergeret ad predi-
candum uel mitteret predicatorum bonos. Quia a tempore

accompanies this article, omitting all mere differences of spelling. The reading of the MS. comes first in each case, followed by that of Wadding's text (2nd edition): Fol. 170 v^o. indie. et in ecclesia: Indiæ ad Ecclesiam; Socius fuit vie mee: socius fuit meæ viæ; Jpsum uero Imperatorem cum: ipsum uero cum; inueteratus est in ydolatria: inveteratus est idololatria; ego sum apud eum iam est annus duodecimus. Nestorianj quidem: ego sum apud eum iam ante duos annos. Nestoriani quidam; quod non permiserunt: quod non permittant; nec aliam quam Nestorianj: nec aliam, quam Nestorianam; prefati Nestorinj: prefati Nestoriani; explorator magus et dementatorum hominum: magnus explorator et dementator hominum; facto aliquanto intervallo: facto aliquo intervallo; fol. 171 r^o. quod alius nuntius fuerit: quod aliquis nuntius fuit; quinque annis: quinque annos; Jta quod sepe: Ita persepe; Tandem per quorundam: Tandem per cuiusdam; emulorum et ipsos: æmulorum, quos; sine confessione: sine socio; supradicte infamationes: supradictæ informationes; .xl. pueros: CL. pueros; litteris latinis et ritu nostro: litteris Latinis, & Græcis ritu nostro; in conuentu siue sim presens: in Conuentibus sit, siue præsens sim; imperator delectatur multum: Imperator delectat multum; tamen secundum usum: & secundum usum; de bono Rege Georgio: omitted; de Septa nestorianorum: Georgius de secta Nestorianorum; de genere illius magni Regis: de genere illustri Magni Regis; sacris uestibus indutus ministravit. Jta quod alij: regiis uestibus indutus ministravit: sed quidam alij; pape. et nomen meum vocans: Papæ, vocans; herede in cunabulis: herede ferme incunabilis. To these may be added one passage from Andrew's letter, fol. 186 v^o—et sum sano corpore et quantum longeuitas uite patitur vigorosus et agilis. nichil quidem preter Canitiem habens de defectibus naturalibus et proprietatibus senectutis: & sum sano corpore, & quantum longevitas vitæ patitur, aliquibus adhuc annis in hac messe laborare potero, licet canitiem habeam ex defectibus naturalibus & proprietatibus senectutis. None of these differences (except possibly the one to which this note primarily refers) seem to me to make it unlikely that Wadding used or made a rather hurried copy of the actual MS. which is now at Paris and was formerly, according to Colonel Yule (*Cathay*, vol. i, p. 17), at Rome; and in any case the differences have to be accounted for, and they may as well be due to Wadding (or his friend) as to any other scribe. Apart from clerical errors like "explorator magus et dementatorum", "uia breuior et securiorum", "aduientibus . . . et uidentes", etc., the reading of the MS. is, I believe, in no instance inferior to that of Wadding's text.

¹ Ethyopia no doubt represents some part of Asia rather than Abyssinia or any other part of Africa, but its exact situation seems to be hard to fix. Colonel Yule (*Cathay*, vol. i, p. 168) points out that this deputation probably reached John in India, and suggests that Ethiopia may mean Socotra. Herodotus (bk. vii, 70) speaks of the straight-haired "Ethiopians from the sun-rising".

[illegible]

Tunc a huiusmodi de se fieri nuntius q
 bus nuntius ab illis vultu primum
 eorum. Itaque conatus huiusmodi ut
 claretur quod est in medio quod claretur
 claretur quod est in medio quod claretur
 claretur quod est in medio quod claretur

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Q. *Quid sit illud quod dicitur in Genesi 1. 1. In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram. Et dicitur in Genesi 2. 1. In diebus illis creavit Deus hominem.*

beati Mathej euangeliste et discipulorum eius. predicatorum non habuerunt qui eos instruerent in fide xpisti. et multum desiderant ad ueram xpisti fidem peruenire. Et si fratres ibj mitterentur omnes conuerterentur. ad xpistum. et fierent ueri xpistianj. Nam sunt plurimj in oriente qui sollo nomine cristiani dicuntur. et in xpistum credunt. Set de scripturis et sanctorum doctrinis aliud nesciunt simpliciter uiuentes cum non habeant predicatorum et doctores..

Item dicit frater Johannes quod post festum omnium sanctorum baptizauit .cccc. [172 r^o, col. 2] personas. et quia ipse audiuit quod plures fratres utriusque ordinis ad persas et ad Gazariam accesserunt ortatur eos ad predicandum feruenter fidem dominj nostri Jhsuxpisti. et ad faciendum fructum animarum Data dicebat littera. ipsa. in Cambaliech ciuitate regnj Katay. Anno dominj .m^o. cccvj^o. in dominica quinquagesime. mensis februarii.¹

IX. **F**rater uero Thomas de Tolentino² a tartaria rediens cum istis epistolis. qui et ipse frater minor et predicator deuotus. iam per annos plures predicauerat inter infideles. ueniens in ytaliam. accessit ad curiam Romanam ultra montes in uaschonium. ubi papa Clemens morabatur cum cardinalibus. prius hec dei magnalia fratris Johannis de Murro³ olim generali ministro fratrum minorum. et

¹ Quinquagesima fell on 13 February in 1306.

² Thomas suffered martyrdom in April, 1321, at Tana in India, together with three others. Our MS. speaks on fol. 185^{vo} of the landing of the bones of these martyrs at Zaitun by Odoric and his companions as follows :—" Et cum ab eis [i.e. the scrutinizing officials] euasissemus. per dei gratiam ad ciuitatem Zaitan ad locum fratrum nostrorum peruenimus. Et cum alijs fratribus nostris congaudentes de glorioso martirio sanctorum fratrum nostrorum et gratias deo agentes simul cum alijs xpistianis. ossa sacra. Sanctorum fratrum. Thome. de marchia [?]. de oppido talentino. Et fratris Jacobj. de Padua. Et fratris petrj de senis [Siena]. Et fratris Demetrii layei. qui linguas nouerat plures. cum ipse in tartaria natus esset. et adultus. in ecclesia nostrorum fratrum recondita sunt reuerenter. et ibj cum multa deuotione conseruantur." Cf. p. 541, n. 3.

³ Johannes de Muro Vallis was elected Minister General in June, 1296, made Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia in 1302, and died in 1312 or 1313. Cf. *Annales Minorum*, tom. vi, pp. 7, 200; Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, tom. iv, pp. 423 (b), 429 (d).

tunc cardinali nuntiauit. Et ipse frater Johannes domino pape et cardinalibus retulit. Et aduocatus frater thomas in concistorium. Coram domino papa et cardinalibus et prelati sermone preclaro ista de nostris ammiranda opera sic bene incepta et prosecuta. per fratrem Johannem de monte coruino et alios fratres. recitauit. rogans dominum papam et cardinales. ut operam darent ut hoc opus de augeretur. et perficeretur. de .vij. fratribus episcopis

Et dominus papa clemens gaudio magno repletus cum cardinalibus de ista maxima commutatione dextre excelsi. Auidus et sollicitus ut tam sanctum opus dei prosequeretur. fratri Gun Saluo¹ Generali ministro fratrum minorum imposuit. ut statim cum consilio fratrum eligeret .vij. bonos fratres minores. ornatos uirtutibus. et approbatos sensu. et eruditos in scripturis diuinis. et ipsos fratres auctoritate sua. Episcopos ordinare et consecrare faceret. et illos transmitteret in tartariam. cum priuilegijs domini pape. ut fratrem Johannem in Archiepiscopum et patriarcham. totius orientis ordinarent et consecrarent. Et [?] ipsi .vij. episcopi. sicut suffraganei illi astarent. in propinquis ciuitatibus magnis. iuxta Cambaliech constituti Episcopi. ut sicut deus per sanctum franciscum. latinam ecclesiam illuminauerat uerbo pariter et exemplo. et ad salutem multa milia animarum reduxerat. Ita et per discipulos eius. populos orientis infideles. et cristianos scismaticos. et herrantes. ad fidem xpistianam reduceret. et lumen fidei quod per ipsos fratres minores Jhsus xpistus in regnis tartarorum accenderat. Ita per eos continue augeretur. et conseruaretur. ne posset extingui. Electi ergo fuerunt .vij. boni fratres. a Generali ministro. in

¹ "Hoc anno [1304] in festo Pentecostes celebratum est Assisii Capitulum Generale trigesimum quartum, presidente Cardinale Joanne de Muro, Ordinis Vicario. Electus est in Ministrum Generalem frater Gondisalvus de Valle-bona, vulgo Balbona Gallæcus, uti aliqui volunt, Lusitanus vero Ulyssiponensis apud Willotum, provincie sancti Jacobi alumnus, sed provincie Castellæ Minister. . . ." Gondisalvus died in 1313. Cf. *Annales Minorum*, tom. vi, pp. 39, 200.

episcopos. Scilicet. duo. de prouincia sancti francisci. que est capud ordinis. frater Andreas lector. de perusio. et frater peregrinus de castello. [fol. 172 v°] frater Nicholaus de apulia. minister olim prouincie sancti francisci. frater Guilielmus de franchya. et alij. tres fratres episcopi. de alijs prouincijs ordinis. Et cum priuilegijs domini pape misit illos generalis minister in tartariam interiorem et in yndiam. ad fratrem Johannem. exemplar priuilegij ad fratrem Johannem. epistola clementis. pape ad fratrem Johannem.

- X. Clemens Episcopus. Seruus seruorum dej. Dilecto filio
 C in xpisto. fratrj Johanni de monte coruino ordinis fratrum minorum per nos in Archiepiscopum Cambaliensem electo et constituto. salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. etcetera. (Rex regum, salvator noster Iesus Christus, inter alia caritatis opera, quae hominibus laborantibus in hac valle miseriae magis necessaria et in conspectu divinae maiestatis plus accepta fore noscuntur, evangelicae praedicationis officium, in quo fratres tui ordinis habent incumbere assidue ut solliciti pastoribus ecclesiae adiutores, maioris priuilegii uoluit praerogativa praeferrari. Propterea, ut sermo Domini dignis progressibus provehatur, oportet viros spirituales, vitae munditiam et intelligentiae gratiam cum Iohanne sortitos, qui populis et gentibus, linguis regibusque multis Christum Dominum praedicent, praesertim in partibus illis, ubi negotium catholicae fidei patrociniū salutaris propagationis implorat, in partem huiusmodi pastoralis sollicitudinis deputari.)¹ infra. Sequitur.

Sane nuper ad notitiam nostram. et dicte sedis apostolice fide digna relatione peruenit. Quod tu olim zelo orthodoxe fidej xpistiane accensus et caritate. de mandato sedis eiusdem ex premissis consensu ac ordinis tuj et Generalis ministri licentia speciali. vt lucrj faceres animas infidelium

¹ This passage enclosed in brackets and similar passages below are taken from Sbaralea (Eubel), *Bullarium Franciscanum*, tom. v, 1898, p. 37, etc.

deo uiuo. ad ipsas infidelium orientalium partium te personaliter transtulisti. Et in terris dominij tartarorum quam plures infidelium per lauacrum sacri baptismatis ad ueram fidem xpisti fauente tibi spiritus sancti gratia redusisti fideliter et attente. etcetera que sequuntur. ([Considerantes igitur attentius clara huius sanctae operationis studia te in dictis partibus existentem de fratrum nostrorum consensu et apostolicae plenitudine potestatis in ciuitate Cambalien., magna utique et honorabili regni magnifici principis magni regis Tartarorum in archiepiscopum assumimus et praeficimus in pastorem, curam et sollicitudinem animarum omnium existentium in toto dominio Tartarorum tibi plenariam committentes tibi que exercendi omnia, quae ad iura archiepiscopalia spectare noscuntur, prout permittunt canonicae sanctiones eadem auctoritate concedentes plenam et liberam potestatem. Dat. Pictavis, x kalendas augusti, anno secundo.)]¹

Concedit dominus papa clemens fratri Johanni in hoc priuilegio. ut ipse factus archiepiscopus. Episcopos instituere et consecrare possit et sacerdotes et clericos in ciuitatibus et prouintijs orientalibus. et omnem [?] auctoritatem suam concedit sibi. ut sicut dominus papa. in occidentali et latina ecclesia presidet summus pontifex super omnes episcopos et prelatos. beati Petri vicarius. Ita et frater Johannes summus Archiepiscopus presideat super omnes episcopos et prelatos in partibus illis. hoc pacto et titulo. ut semper se subditum romano pontifici confiteatur. et ab eo usum pallij recognoscat. tam ipse frater Johannes. quam omnes Archiepiscopi Cambalienses futuri per secula. romane ecclesie subiaceant in his pactis. Commendat etiam dominus papa fratrem Johannem quod ecclesias construxerit. et picturas noui et ueteris testamenti in eis depingi fecerit. in testimonium mirabilium operum dei nostri. ut rudes populi qui nunquam ista audierunt. nec sciuerunt. per picturas ipsas. discant deum

¹ *Bullarium Franciscanum*, tom. v, pp. 37, 38.

intelligere [172 vº, col. 2] et ammiranda opera eius. Et ut frater Johannes Archiepiscopus. et alij fratres in hoc opere diuino melius prosperarentur. dominus papa clemens ad dominum Chaaan misit epistolam honorificam in hac data.¹ . . . [fol. 173 rº] . . .

XI. **I**lli uero septem fratres Episcopi. et alij fratres cum eis quam plurimj diuino repleti spiritu prompti ad obediendum pro nomine domini nostri Jhsuxpisti. licentia et benedictione accepta profecti sunt. predicando ubique. domino cooperante. fructum plurimum fatiando animarum. de fratribus minoribus uisitantibus captiuos. . .

XII. (86. *Dilecto filio fratri Andreae de Perusio ord. fratrum Minorum per nos assumpto in episcopum archiepiscopalis sedis Cambalien. in dominio Tartarorum.*

Rex regum etc. m. m. ut supra n. 85 [p. 559] usque potestatem.² Ut autem in eisdem partibus incrementum

¹ Here follow in the MS. letters ad regem tartarorum, occupying the greater part of fol. 172 vº, col. 2, and epistola domini clementis. pape. fratribus minoribus euntibus in tartariam ad predicandum fidem xpisti. occupying the first twenty-two lines of fol. 173 rº, col. 1.

² Raynaldus (*Ann. Eccles.*, tom. xv, p. 26, an. 1307. n. 29) begins this letter thus: *Clemens etc. Dilecto filio fratri Andreae de Perusio Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, per nos assumpto in Episcopum suffraganeum archiepiscopalis sedis Cambaliensis in dominio Tartarorum.*

Nuper considerantes attentius clara sancte operationis studia, quæ dilectus filius frater Joannes de monte Corvino in Archiepiscopum Cambaliensem per nos assumptus in partibus Tartarorum, secum Domino faciente virtutem, operatus est hactenus, ac in partibus ipsis existens assiduè operatur, ipsum fratrem Joannem Ordinis fratrum Minorum professum, & in dictis partibus existentem de fratrum nostrorum consilio & Apostolicæ plenitudine potestatis in civitate Cambaliensi, magna utiq; & honorabili regni magnifici principis magni Regis tartarorum in Archiepiscopum assumpsimus & præfecimus in pastorem, curam & sollicitudinem animarum omnium existentium in toto dominio Tartarorum sibi plenariam committentes; eiq; exercendi omnia, quæ ad jura archiepiscopalia spectare noscuntur, prout permittunt canonice sanctiones, eadem auctoritate plenam & liberam potestatem. Ut autem . . .

Wadding (*Ann. Min.*, tom. vi, p. 86) mentions the letter *Nuper considerantes etc.* addressed to Andrew on July 23, but does not give the text. It is evidently from this letter that Eubel restored the lost letter to John (p. 560 above). Mosheim (*Hist. Tart. Eccles.*, p. 123)

salutis animarum perfectius provenire valeat et fides catholica semper de bono in melius per evangelicae praedicationis doctrinam auctore Domino prosperetur, nos (summi regis magisterio eruditi, qui inclinata coelorum altitudine, ut hominem redimeret, factus homo, discipulos, quos elegit, in universum mundum misit evangelium praedicare) cupientes viros providos et discretos, scientes ad salutem populos incredulos erudire, in partem huiusmodi sollicitudinis evocare, qui rectas faciant semitas Dei nostri et populum acceptabilem ei reddant, te sufficienter in lege Domini eruditum, vita et religione conspicuum, morum honestate decorum ac multarum virtutum titulis commendatum, de fratrum nostrorum consilio et apostolicae potestatis plenitudine in adiutorium commissae dicto fratri Ioanni sollicitudinis pro maiori animarum salute specialiter deputamus ac in dicto dominio in episcopum assumimus et praeficimus in pastorem, mandantes auctoritate praesentium venerabili fratri Ioanni Portuensi¹ et dilectis filiis nostris Ioanni tituli Sanctorum Marcellini et Petri presbytero ac Lucae sanctae Mariae in via lata diacono cardinalibus, ut tibi auctoritate nostra faciant munus consecrationis impendi, et constituentes te suffraganeum archiepiscopi supradicti, tibi nihilominus et successoribus tuis episcopis in eodem dominio succedentes, ut omnibus et singulis gratiis et concessionibus, quas nuper per litteras nostras fratribus dicti ordinis in terras Saracenorum, Paganorum et aliorum infidelium proficiscentibus auctoritate apostolica duximus indulgendas, auctoritate nostra libere uti possis. Volumus itaque ac tibi in remissionem iniungimus peccatorum, quatenus, huiusmodi commissum tibi pastorale officium in Dei et nostro nomine devote

gives a similar letter, beginning *Considerantes olim*, addressed to William of Villa-nova, and (on p. 126) a letter beginning "Rex regum" (cf. p. 559 above) addressed to Peter of Florence. It seems to be impossible to say exactly how the text of these various letters stands in the Vatican Registers without access to the Registers themselves.

¹ i.e. Ioannes de Muro ; cf. p. 557, n. 3.

suscipiens, cum divinae benedictionis gratia ad partes easdem te personaliter transferas, propositurus ibi verbum divinum, prout Spiritus sancti gratia dabit tibi, ac de nostro et apostolicae sedis favore plene confisus dictum officium sic solerter et sollicite secundum datam tibi a Deo prudentiam exequi studeas, ut fructum afferas et fructus tuus manens in prolem filiorum adoptionis excrescat, et sponsa Christi ecclesia, de sua foecunditate in Christo sponso suo congaudens, fidelem et utilem ministrum se destinasse laetetur, et dictarum partium populi salutis et quietis angelum suscepisse in Domino glorientur, tuque proin nihilominus ipsius ecclesiae gratiam et divinae retributionis gloriam uberius merearis. Datum Pictavis, X kalendas augusti, pontificatus nostri anno secundo.

In e. m. dilecto filio Nicolao de Bantia eiusdem ordinis.

In e. m. dil. fil. fr. Gerardo Albuini eiusdem ordinis.

In e. m. dil. fil. fr. Ulrico de Seyfridstorf eiusdem ordinis.

In e. m. dil. fil. fr. Peregrino de Castello eiusdem ordinis.

In e. m. dil. fil. fr. Guilelmo de Villanova eiusdem ordinis.

87. *Dilectis filiis Gerardo Albuini, Ulrico de Seyfridsdorf [Seistdsdorf], Guilelmo de Villanova, Nicolao de Bantia [Bontra], Andreae de Perusio et Peregrino de Castello, ord. fratrum Minorum, per nos assumptis in episcopos suffraganeos archiepiscopalis sedis Cambalien. dominii Tartarorum.*

Nuper considerantes etc. Dat. Pictavis, X kal. augusti, anno secundo.

88. *Dilecto filio fratri Iohanni de Montecorvino de ord. fratrum Minorum per nos in archiepiscopum Cambalien. assumpto.*

Pridem considerantes etc. Dat. Pictavis, X kal. augusti, anno secundo.)¹

¹ *Bull. Franc.*, tom. v, pp. 38, 39.

[fol. 186 r^o, col. 2.]

XIII. **E**t quia vir Religiosus et venerabilis. frater Johannes de ordine minorum primus in Regno Kathay. et in campaliech ciuitate magna seminauit uerbum dej. et fundauit ecclesias. et plusquam .x. milia tartarorum conuertit ad xpistum et. batticzauit. Ad quem Clemens. papa .v. plures fratres consecratos in episcopos. transmisit et pallium pontificale: pro se et omnibus successoribus suis.

Vnus uero de illis fratribus episcopis. post annos plurimos tales remisit epistolas. que sub breuitate inferius describuntur. ita continentes.

XIV. **F**rater Andreas. de perusio. de ordine minorum fratrum. Diuina permissione vocatus Episcopus. Reuerendo Patri. fratri .+. Guardiano perusini conuentus salutem et pacem in domino sempiternam. et infra. Sequitur.

Nam propter immensam terrarum mariumque distantiam inter me et vos interiectam uix sperare possum quod littere ad uos per me transmissae ad manus uestras ualeant peruenire. et infra subsequitur. Noueritis me itaque cum bone memorie fratre peregrino Coepiscopo et mee peregrinationis indiuiduo comite post multos labores et langores in medias uariaque incomoda atque pericula in terra pariter et in mari ubi fuimus rebus omnibus et etiam tunicis et habitibus spoliati. Demum deo Iuuante ad Cambaliensem ciuitatem que sedes est imperij magni Chanis anno dominice. incarnationis. millesimo. ccc^o. xvij.¹ ut credo peruenisse. ubi secundum mandatum a Sede Apostolica nobis datum. Archiepiscopo consecrato moram ibi per quinquennium ferme contraximus. Infra quod temporis

¹ This date is manifestly wrong, but whether Wadding's mcccviij is the right correction is very doubtful. mcccxiii is perhaps more plausible, as Andrew says that he spent five years in Khanbulig and went to Zaitun four years before 1322.

spatium procurauimus. Alapha:¹ ab Imperatore magnifico pro uictu et vestitu octo personarum. Est autem alafa impense quas imperator quas imperator tribuit nuntijs magnatorum. oratoribus. bellatoribus. et diuersorum artium artificibus. et Jocularioribus pauperibus. et diuersis diuersarum conditionum personis. que impense plurimum latinorum Regum introitus expensas que transcendunt. De diuitijs magnificentia et gloria huius magni Imperatoris. de vastitate Imperij. multitudine populorum. numerositate Ciuitatum et magnitudine earundem. et de ordinatione Imperij in quo nemo aduersus alium ausus est leuare gladium. transeo. quia longum foret [fol. 186 v°] scribere et audientibus incredibilia uiderentur. Nam ego ipse qui presens sum talia audio quod uix ipsa credere possum. etcetera. Sequitur. infra. Est quedam magna ciuitas iuxta mare Oceanum que uocatur lingua persica Zayton² in qua ciuitate vna diues domina Armena Ecclesiam erexit pulcram satis et grandem. quam quidem de ipsius uoluntate per Archiepiscopum cathedralem effectam cum competentibus dotibus. fratri Gerardo Episcopo et fratribus nostris qui cum eo erant donauit in uita et in morte reliquit. qui primus eandem cathedram suscepit. Mortuo autem dicto Episcopo inibi que sepulto uoluit Archiepiscopus in eadem ecclesia me facere successorem. Set ego huius modi locationi et successioni me non

¹ This is one of many indications in this letter of the many foreigners and of the prevalence of foreign languages in China under the Mongol rule. Colonel Yule (*Cathay*, vol. i, p. 222) says that Quatremère (*Rashideddin*, p. 371) points out that Rashid ed-Din uses 'alafah to signify (1) the allowance made by the prince for the keep of animals such as elephants, and (2) an allowance for the entertainment of ambassadors and other like personages. Yule himself compares the Arabic 'alaf, fodder, and 'uluf, a soldier's wages, a stipend or provision.

² The identity of Zaitun is much disputed, but the weight of evidence appears to be in favour of it being 泉州 Ch'üan-chou in Fukien. Among other evidence which has been neglected is the discovery at or near Ch'üan-chou in 1619 and 1638 of three stones carved with crosses. In the date below (p. 567) "in Zaito in Zayton" is perhaps a copyist's error.

prebente assensum ipsam contulit fratri Peregrino Episcopo memorato qui illuc habita opportunitate se contulit. et posquam paucis annis rexid eandem. anno dominj m°. ccc. xxiij°. in crastino octaue Apostolorum Petri et pauli diem clausid extremum. Ante cuius decessum per quattuor fere annos ego qum in Cambaliech non eram consolatus ex aliquibus causis. procurauj quod dictum Alafa elymosina imperialis mihi daretur in prefata ciuitate Zayton. que distat a Cambaliech itinere mensium fere trium ut dixi sollicite procurauj. Et cum octo equitaturis ab imperatore mihi concessis ad eandem ciuitatem cum magno honore perrexi et applicuj adhuc fratre Peregrino prefato uiuente. Et in quodam nemore proximo ciuitati ad quartam partem vnjus miliarij Ecclesiam conuenientem et pulcram hedi- ficari feci cum omnibus officinis sufficientibus. pro .xx. fratribus. et cum .iiij. cameris quarum quelibet esset pro quocumque prelato sufficiens. Jn quo quidem loco moram traho continuam et uiuo de elymosina regia memorata. que iuxta mercatorum Januensium extimationem ascendere potest annuatim ad ualorem . C . florenorum aureorum uel circa. et de hac elomosina magnam partem in hedi- ficatione loci predicti expendi. cuj similem in hermitorijs in tota nostra prouincia nullum scio quo ad pulcritudinem et omnem commoditatem.

Denique non longo elapso tempore post obitum [186 v°, col. 2] fratris peregrinj recepi decretum Archiepiscopi de locatione mea in memorata ecclesia Cathedrali. cuj locationi assensum prebuj causa rationabili suadente. et nunc in loco uel ecclesia ciuitatis nunc in hermitorio moram facio iuxta mee libitum uoluntatis. et sum sano corpore et quantum longeuitas uite patitur vigorosus et agilis. nichil quidem preter Canitiem habens de defectibus naturalibus et proprietatibus senectutis. Sane in isto vasto Jpperio sunt gentes de omni natione que sub celo est et de omni septa. Et conceditur omnibus et singulis uiuere secundum septam suam. Est enim hec opinio

apud eos seu potius error. quod unus quisque in sua septa saluatur. Et nos predicare possumus libere et secure. Set de iudeis et sarracenis nemo conuertitur. De ydolatriis batticzantur quam plurimj. Set battizatj non recte incedunt per uiam xpistianitatis. de sanctis fratribus.

Quattuor nostri fratres martirizati fuerunt in yndia a sarracenis. quorum unus bis in ignem copiosum iniectus illesus euasid. Et tamen ad tam stupendum miraculum nullus est a sua perfidia permutatus. hec omnia supradicta sub breuitate uestre paternitati destinare curauj. ut per uos ad aliorum notitiam deuoluantur. fratribus spiritualibus et amicis meis precipuis non scribo quia qui decesserint et supersint ignoro. vnde rogo quod me habeant excusatum. omnes saluto me que omnibus reconmendo intime quantum possum. Et vos pater Guardiane reconmendetis me ministro et custodi perusino. et alijs fratribus uniuersis.

Omnes episcopi suffraganej facti per dominum papam clementem Kambalicnsis sedis migrauerunt in pace ad dominum. Ego solus remansi. frater Nicholaus de Banthra et frater Andrutius de Asisio et unus alius episcopus mortuj fuerunt in ingressu yndie inferioris in terra quadam calidissima ubj et plures alij fratres mortuj sunt et sepulti. valeat in domino uestra paternitas nunc et semper. Data in Zaito in Zayton anno dominj. m^o. ccc^o. xxvj^o. in mense Januarij.

Finally we give the full text of a passage from the Chronicle of John of Winterthur to which Colonel Yule only alludes (*Cathay*, vol. i, p. 173) without translating or quoting it. The passage has many points of interest. First it contains probably a reference to the German Brother Arnold (cf. p. 547), John of Monte Corvino's earliest companion at Khanbalig. Then it gives a summary of what is beyond doubt a letter (No. VI, above) of John (although it ascribes the authorship to the German), in which the following points are to be noticed. It is

interesting to find the author at that date drawing attention to the bearing of the letter on the question of the extent of St. Thomas' travels in Asia (cf. p. 547, n. 1). Secondly we notice that the correct number of John's foundlings, forty, is preserved as against all the printed texts of the letter itself. The confusion between King George and Prester John is carried a step further by the statement that John of Monte Corvino had converted Prester John; but perhaps the writer had read Marco Polo, who says "*Et de ceste provence en est rois un dou legnages au Prestre Johan, et encore est Prestre Johan, son nom est Giorgie.*" (*Recueil de voyages*, tom. i, p. 74). Then, again, the destination of the letter, though we can gather it from the second letter (cf. p. 552), is plainly told us. It was "directed to his General of the Northern Vicariate". Pascal of Vittoria, whose letter of 1338 is translated by Colonel Yule (*Cathay*, vol. i, pp. 231-7), speaks of "Gazaria in the Vicariat of the North, and in the empire of the Tartars", and again of "Sarray, a city of the Saracens of the Tartar empire, in the Vicariat of the North." Lastly we seem to have some fragments of the original letter preserved for us which would otherwise be lost, for the statement that John used to be summoned to appear before the Khan, taking with him four or six or eight of his choristers, cannot be explained as a summary or even as a vague recollection of any part of either of John's letters as they now exist.

The passage is as follows:—

- XV. Paucis annis evolutis ante prædicta [i.e., very vaguely, A.D. 1330], quidam frater ordinis Sancti Francisci, oriundus de partibus inferioris Alemaniae peregre profectus ad partes infidelium, ad evangelizandum eis Christum, ejus epistolam ab eo directam suo generali de vicaria aquilonari legi, latam & diffusam, laudabiliter ibi gessit, fructum animarum pinguem faciendo. Nam, ut ex epistola sua elicui & excerptsi, multam gentem in imperio Canis

Magni Tartarorum Imperatoris, fonte baptismatis & verbo salutifero prædicationis ad fidem Christi convertit: immo maximum fructum animarum fecisset, si Nestoriani hæretici sive falsi Christiani illic multiplicati, ipsi non obstitissent. Nam illi felicibus eorum actibus invidentes, ipsi pro viribus adversabantur. Interdum aliquos per calumnias, detractones falsas, adulationes de majoribus natu illius terræ contra eum concitabant, flagellationes, incarcerationes, & varias castigationes apud potentes per plures dies & annos procurabant ei nefarie fieri: quæ omnia patienter pro Christo sustinuit. Quandoque Canis Magnus, quia eum intime dilexerat, percipiens eum innocenter pœnis adstrictum, turris vel arctæ custodiæ mancipatum, clementer eripuit ipsum a captivitate, & a cunctis tribulationibus suis, libertati eum restituendo, pœnas graves eis minando, qui eum de cætero verbis vel factis læderent. Aliquot annis in plagis orientalibus & aquilonaribus degens, postquam ipsas intraverat, forte VIII. vel IX. Tam perfecte idioma terræ illius vel gentis didicerat, quod potenter & audacter in eo seminare poterat verbum Dei. Tantum etiam prædicationibus suis in populo fructificavit & profecit, homines ad Christi fidem trahendo, quod frequenter infra spatium unius mensis vel hebdomadæ multa millia hominum ad ejus baptismum convolarunt, in locis ubi prædicaverat, ut fatetur in epistola. Ante nunquam Evangelium Christi fuerat prædicatum: quanquam enim de beato Thoma legatur, quod per eum India, quæ sibi in sorte prædicationis advenerat, in magna parte, & per duos pueros Romanos tempore Silvestri Papæ, & Constantini Imperatoris Romani, ut legitur in Ecclesiastica hystoria, in Christum crediderint; tamen juxta verbum suum ad loca, ubi ipse evangelizavit Christum, nullus Catholicus ante ipsum fundamenta, vel saltem lapidem primarium fidei orthodoxæ qui poneret, venit. Nulla insitio, immo nec plantula fidei Apostolicæ ante eum illic pullulavit: sed ipse primus

large ibi semen Christianæ serens doctrinæ in terram bonam, vomere prædicationis & conpunctionis scissam, uberem messem credentium sive ad Christum conversorum messuit; diligens enim et indefessus quia fuerat operarius in vinea Christi & in agro Dominico, manipulos non paucorum conversorum, sed plurimorum millium reportavit. Presbiterum & Johannem, Regem opulentum & potentem, de quo plura hyperbolice in uno libello apud nos leguntur, ad Christum & per eum totam suam gentem convertit. Sed heu post mortem suam disciplinæ Christianæ perniciosam ad vomitum paganismini compulsa rediit, per successorem suum ydolatram pessimum & tyrannum; quos revocare oves errantes & perditas ad caulas seu ovile fidei, frater memoratus non prævaluit, quia nimis ab illo regno elongatus, degens in ditione Canis Magni, Domini dominantium ultra XX. vel XXX. dietas fuit. Hic sæpe dictus frater XL. pueros terrigenos emit, litterasque Latinas & Gramaticam eos docuit: tandem vero post lactis & pulmenti pueris congruam refectionem ipsis ministratam, solidum cibum ipsis præbuit, eos in Musica & in Sacra pagina inbuendo, horas quoque canonicas & cantum adeo perfecte didicerunt, quod eas alternatim in choro psallere egregie noverunt; Quidam etiam eorum ingeniosi, & vociferati præ aliis existentes chorum gloriose rexerunt. In cantu ipsorum Canis magnus summe delectabatur: unde prædictus frater ipsorum magister & instructor frequenter vocatus ab ipso fuit, ut assumptis secum IIII. vel VI. solatium sibi per cantum ipsorum faceret, qui sibi libenti animo obtemperans, & in hoc satisfacere & complacere affectans, alternatim ex pueris præfatis IIII. VI. vel VIII. secum assumptis coram Cane Magno & suis Satrapis in aula regia comparens pluries, per svavem melodyam ipsorum sibi gaudium & lætitiā non modicā impendebat, eum cum suis taliter intime demulcendo, & mirabiliter recreando. Hanc ob causam frater ille, & propter vitæ suæ simplicem puritatem, &

sanctam laudabilemque conversationem, tantam gratiam invenit, quod eum propitium patronum, protectorem, & quasi præcipuum & singularem amicum in cunctis suis necessitatibus gratiosissime sentiebat, in oculis Principis sæpe dicti.¹

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE ABOVE LATIN TEXTS

- I. To Kubilai the great Khan, famous Prince of the Tartars, grace in the present time to lead to glory in the future.

We rejoice in the Lord, noble Prince, and give Him devout and abundant thanks that He, in whose hand are the hearts of the Princes of the Earth, preventing you, as we have heard with joy, with gentle piety by the gift of His grace, has filled your inmost heart with such feelings that the desire of your mind is directed towards the enlarging of the boundaries of Christianity. For shortly after the beginning of our promotion we received in audience trustworthy messengers who had been sent by the Magnificent Prince Arghun, famous King of the Tartars, who told us very plainly that your Magnificence bears a feeling of great love towards our person and the Roman Church and also towards the nation or people of the Latins. And the said messengers earnestly begged on behalf of the king that we would send some Latin monks to your court. But we, when we heard such pleasing and acceptable reports of so great and so sublime a Prince, rejoiced exceedingly in the Lord, sincerely desiring the increase of your health and the glory of your name, and humbly beseeching the Father of Lights, from whom is every good gift and every perfect gift, that He will

¹ *Corpus Historicum Medii Aevi* etc., a Jo. Georgio Eccardo, Leipsic, 1723; No. XXIV (beginning at col. 1734). *Johannis Vitodurani Chronicon a Friderico II. Imp. ad an. 1348. procedens*, cols. 1895-7. John of Winterthur was a Minor Friar and his *Chronicle* seems to be in a fourteenth century MS. at St. Gall.

lighten your heart, ever proceeding from good to better, with the gift of His inspiration, and will sprinkle you with the dew of His grace to the praise and honour of His glorious Name. Wishing, therefore, to fulfil the King's desires in this respect, and greatly longing that you may readily consent, and be prepared, and very eagerly agree to accept the Christian faith which the aforesaid Church holds and preserves, since without His help accompanying no one is able to please the Most High: Lo, we have chosen our beloved son Brother John of Monte Corvino, with his fellows of the Order of the Minors, the bearer of the present letter, to be sent to you, earnestly praying you to receive him and his aforesaid companions with kindness (to whose teaching we desire that you may cleave close, since it tells of things meet for salvation), and to grant them the help of your Royal favour for the healthful work committed to them, which has in view the salvation of souls, that trusting in that protection they may be able to conduct themselves with more advantage and effect in the same, and that you may win from the Lord, who repays the least service with great rewards, the prize of eternal blessedness.

Dated at Rieti the third day before the Ides of July in our second year (July 13, 1289).¹

II. To the Noble Jolus of Pisa.

We rejoice in the Lord because, according to trustworthy report, you make laudable and wise efforts to extend the boundaries of the Christian faith by diligently bringing those who are not yet lightened with its light to the knowledge of the faith; and that to all the clergy who pass through the land you grant in reverence for Jesus Christ help and kindness, showing yourself no less their chief and special protector. Wherefore we commend

¹ *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, pp. 196, 197; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 55, fol. 314 r. This is followed by a letter to Kaidu, in which again there is no hint of John or any other missionary having gone to his domains before.

the zeal of your laudable diligence all the more fully as we seek the safety of each one the more. And so we stir up your diligence and exhort you in the Lord Jesus Christ so that you increase the zeal of your carefulness about your salutary deeds of this kind and untiring work, that thence you may be rendered more pleasing and acceptable to your Saviour in proportion as more are brought by you from pathless wandering to the way of truth, and from the mists of unbelief to the clear light of the catholic faith. And we send you our benediction according to the tenor of the present letter for the remission of your sins.

Dated as above (July 13, 1289).¹

III. To Arghun, famous King of the Tartars, grace in the present time to lead to glory in the future.

Our wellbeloved son, Brother John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of the Minors, the bearer of the present letter, who has come into our presence from the Eastern Lands, has made it plain to our Apostleship by his careful accounts that you . . . bear a feeling of great love towards us and the Roman Church, and also towards other Churches of Christians. The said Brother added too that your Mightiness had been good enough to show great kindness to him and to his companions while they stayed in your country pursuing the service of Christ . . .

Moreover, most excellent prince, as in our other letter to your Royal Magnificence we thought it right to intimate to you by our venerable brother Rabban Barsauma, Bishop in the East, and certain of your envoys who were sent to us, we, who though unworthy are the Vicar of Christ and successor of St. Peter the chief of the Apostles, exceedingly wish and ardently desire that those whom the water of Baptism has not washed nor the Church of the Christian faith included may altogether forsake the

¹ *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, p. 198.

pathless wanderings in which they stray with dangerous steps, and be brought back to the right way and faithfully keep the aforesaid faith. . . .

And in confidently sending back Brother John, of whom you have had a foretaste, and his companions to your country to carry on the work of salvation which they have begun, we earnestly pray that you will accept our introduction and receive them kindly in reverence for God and from respect for the Apostolic See and for us, granting them the Royal favour for the carrying on of such work . . . ; and that you will keep some of them with you continually that they may put the word of God before you and your people, and may be able to work for the salvation of souls.

Dated at Rieti on the Ides of July in our second year (July 15, 1289).¹

IV. To the venerable brother . . . [Jabalaha], Patriarch of the Nestorians, health and Apostolic benediction.

And so we exhort you, Brother, with fatherly love, as also in the Son of God the Father we persuade you with a sincere heart to observe the catholic faith which the Roman Church holds and keeps inviolate as it is handed down, and to remove every obstacle and delay and break the bands of difficulty and to hasten . . . to be united with the same church; and so shall you win the prize of a greater recompense from the Lord as you shall provoke the more to it (i.e. to union) by your laudable example; for subjects are wont to be easily drawn to follow the example of what they see done by those set over them.

For we hope and most confidently think that you will gladly and thoroughly fulfil what we set before you, by diligently and carefully persuading the people who are subject to you to it, since our beloved son, Brother

¹ *Ann. Min.*, tom. v, pp. 195, 196; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 54, fol. 313 r^o.

John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of the Minor Friars, the bearer of this letter, has thought good to tell us, concerning your zeal, many good and laudable works, of which we have heard with joy. Accept then with reverence the sincere exhortation and devoutly receive the salutary persuasion of the Vicar of Christ, that you may study so laudably to behave yourself to the honour and glory of the Creator of all things as to render yourself by increase of merit more pleasing in His sight. Moreover, we urge you to accept our special introduction for the same Brother and his companions, and to treat them with kindness and favour, that, fortified with such and so great protection, they may be able to conduct themselves in their ministry more profitably and conveniently, and more effectually to carry on the work of Jesus Christ to the praise of the Divine Name. . . .

Dated at Rieti on the Ides of July in the second year (July 15, 1289).¹

MS. Latin 5006.

V. Concerning the foundation and planting of a new Church in Tartary.

In the time, likewise, of this Pope Clement happy news and good tidings from Inner India and the kingdoms of the East came in the parts of the West and into Italy, and filled the hearts of the Latins, and the hearts of the Minor and Preaching Friars, clergy and lay, of the Princes and Bishops with joy and wonder.

For Brother John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of Minor Friars, a devout imitator of the blessed Francis, stern and severe to himself, and eloquent in teaching and preaching the word of God; supported with great

¹ Chabot, *Hist. de Mar Jabalaha*, pp. 218, 219; *Reg. Vat.*, tom. 44, c. 48, fol. 312 r^o. Chabot copies the text from Langlois, col. 391, No. 2218. Jabalaha III, Patriarch from 1281 to 1317, was a Uigur born in 1245 at Koshang in China. He travelled to the West with his master Bar Sauma (or Rabban Sauma), a native of Khanbalig, about the year 1275. Bar Sauma was sent by Arghun on an embassy to the Pope, the Kings of France and England, and other European potentates in 1287.

authority and gracious privileges by lord Pope Nicholas IV, set out on his journey to preach to the infidels and entered the kingdom of the Persians. And after he had sojourned some time in the vast city of Tauris with the Minor and Preaching Friars, who were dwelling there in one place preaching the faith of Christ to the heathen and baptizing, Brother John himself stayed with them for many days. Thence he made his way into India. And his journey and holy work are described in this his letter, which is as follows.

The letter of Brother John, the legate of the Pope.

- VI. I, brother John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of the Minor Friars, departed from Tauris, a city of the Persians, in the year of the Lord mclxxxxxi, and entered into India; and I was in the country of India, and in the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, for thirteen months, and I baptized there in different places about a hundred persons. And the companion of my journey was Brother Nicholas of Pistoia, of the Order of the Preaching Brothers, who died there and was buried in the same Church. And I, proceeding on my further journey, made my way to Cathay, the realm of the Emperor of the Tartars, who is called the Great Khan. To the Emperor I presented the letter of the lord Pope, and invited him to adopt the catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he had grown too old in idolatry. However, he bestows many kindnesses upon the Christians, and I have now been abiding with him for eleven years. The Nestorians indeed, men who bear the Christian name but deviate very far from the Christian religion, have grown so powerful in these parts that they have not allowed any Christian of another ritual to have ever so small a chapel, or to publish any other doctrine than the Nestorian. For to these regions there never came any Apostle or disciple of the Apostles. And so the Nestorians aforesaid, both directly and through others whom they bribed, have brought on me persecutions

of the sharpest; declaring that I was not sent by the lord Pope, but was a spy and magician and impostor; and after some while they produced other false witnesses who said that another messenger had been sent with presents of immense value to the Emperor, and that I had murdered him in India and stolen what he was carrying. And these intrigues went on for about five years, so that many a time I was dragged before the judgement seat with the ignominy [of threats] of death. At last, by God's providence, through the confession of certain individuals, the Emperor came to know my innocence and the malice of my rivals, and sent them with their wives and children into exile.

I, indeed, was alone in this pilgrimage without confession for eleven years, until Brother Arnold, a German of the province of Cologne, came to me last year. I have built a Church in the city of Khanbalig, where the king has his chief residence. And this I completed six years ago; and I also made a bell-tower there, and put three bells in it. I have also baptized there, as I reckon, up to this time about six thousand persons; and, if the above-named slanders had not been made, I should have baptized more than thirty thousand; and I am often engaged in baptizing. Also I have bought one after another forty boys, the sons of pagans, of the age of between¹ seven and eleven years, who so far knew no religion. And I have baptized them and taught them to read Latin, and our ritual; and I have written for them thirty Psalters with Hymnaries and two Breviaries, with which eleven boys now know our office and attend services and take their weekly turn of duty as in a convent, whether I am present or not.² And

¹ *Infra* here and below is perhaps meant for *intra*, *t* and *f* being sometimes confused.

² The following notes are kindly supplied by Canon Christopher Wordsworth:—

“In a Minorite Breviary printed at Rome in 1829 *Hebdomadarius* and *Chorus* correspond (roughly speaking) to our ‘Priest’ or ‘Minister’

several of them are writing out Psalters and other necessary books. And the lord Emperor is greatly delighted at their chanting. I strike the bells at all the hours, and with the congregation of babes and sucklings I perform divine service. But we sing by ear, because we have no service-book with the notes.

Concerning the good king George.¹

A certain king of that region, of the school of the Nestorian Christians, who was of the family of that great

and 'Answer' or 'the People'. The Sarum rubrics have for the former either *Hebdomadarius* or *Excellencior persona*, scilicet *Sacerdos*. But there are *boys* of the week as well as priests, vicars, etc., of the week. *Puer hebdomadarius* occurs occasionally in the *Temporale* rubrics of the Salisbury Breviary (ed. Cantab.). e.g., col. xxi. *Solus puer hebdomadarius ex parte Chori stans dicat primum versum Responsorii* (post i. lectionem ad matutinas). *Chorus respondeat* . . . & in col. clxvii. *puer hebdomadarius* served the thurible or censer of the principal officiant at Christmas Evensong, when he and the priest next in seniority went out at the beginning of *Magnificat* to cense the altars round the church.

"The Sarum Custom book or Consuetudinary distinguishes the *puer hebdomadarius responsorii*, or *responsorium*, already mentioned, from the *puer hebdomadarius lectionis*, whose special duty it was to carry and hold the book for the priest to read the collect after *Magnificat* at Evensong.—Cf. W. H. Frere's *Use of Sarum*, i, pp. 45, 52. Presumably the Minorite boys had some weekly duties in their turn similar to those at Salisbury and elsewhere."

Of the service books mentioned only the *Psalters with Hymnals* and the *Short Lessons* need any comment.

(1) Mr. H. Littlehales says: "Psalters sometimes have hymns appended to them, as in the seventh-century MS., Brit. Mus. Vesp., A. 1.; the thirteenth-century MS., Brit. Mus., Harl., 2,888; and the printed Psalter of 1524" (*The Old Service Books of the English Church*, p. 110). And among the books at Mere in Wilts (A.D. c. 1220) was a new Antiphoner, so called, containing psalter, chapter-book, and hymnary.

(2) The Short Lesson is attached to the daily office of Prime in Chapter for persons living in community or under a religious rule. A set of five is printed in the Franciscan Breviary (Rome, 1829), viz. II Thess. iii, 5—after Epiphany to the 1st Sunday in Lent, and after Trinity; Isaiah xxxiii, 2—Advent; Isaiah lv, 6—1st Sunday in Lent to Palm Sunday Eve; Isaiah l, 6, 7—Holy Week; Col. iii, 1, 2—Easter to the Ascension. They are printed in the Psalter at the end of the order for Prime on Sundays. The same set is in the Roman but not, apparently, in the Sarum Breviary.

¹ This and similar headings below were probably added by the compiler of the Chronicle, or sometimes by a later hand. Cf. p. 548, n. 1.

king who was called Prester John of India, attached himself to me in the first year of my coming hither and, being converted by me to the truth of the true catholic faith, took the lesser Orders, and when I celebrated Mass he served, wearing the sacred vestments. So that the other Nestorians accused him of apostasy. Nevertheless, he brought over a great part of his people to the true catholic faith. And he built a beautiful Church on a scale of royal magnificence to the honour of our God, of the Holy Trinity, and of the lord Pope, and of my name,¹ calling it the Roman Church. And this king George departed to the Lord six years ago a true Christian, leaving a son and heir in the cradle who is now nine years old. But the brothers of king George, since they were perfidious followers of the errors of Nestorius, subverted, after the king's death, all whom he had converted, taking them back to their former schism. And because I was alone and was unable to leave the Emperor the Khan I could not go to that Church, which is twenty days journey distant. Yet if some good helpers and fellow-workers come I trust in God that all may be retrieved; for I still possess the grant of the aforesaid king George deceased.

I say again that if there had not been the aforesaid slanders great fruit would have followed. If I had had also two or three comrades to aid me, perhaps the Emperor the Khan too would have been baptized. I ask for such brethren to come, if any are willing to come, as will study to show themselves as an example, and not to make broad their own phylacteries. As for the road, I tell you that the road through the land of Toctai,² Emperor of the Northern Tartars, is the shorter and safer, so that they will be able to come with the envoys in less than five or six months. But the other road is very long and most

¹ The words *nomen meum*, which cannot be translated as they stand, are indistinct in the original and were omitted by Wadding. I have translated them provisionally as if they were *nominis mei*.

² See n. 1, p. 550.

dangerous, including two voyages, of which the first is equal to the distance between Acre and the province of Provence, while the other is equal to the distance between Acre and England ; and it might happen that they would scarcely accomplish that route in two years. Because the first way has not been safe for a long time on account of wars, it is consequently twelve years since I have received any news of the Roman Court and of our Order and the state of the West. It is now two years ago that a certain Lombard physician and surgeon came and filled these parts with incredible blasphemies about the Court of Rome and our Order and the state of the West, and on this account I much desire to learn the truth.

I pray the Brothers whom this letter may reach to do their best that its contents may be able to come to the knowledge of the lord Pope and of the Cardinals and of the agent of our Order at the Court of Rome. The Minister General of our Order I beg for an Antiphonary, a Legend of the Saints, a Gradual, and a Psalter with the music for a copy, for I have nothing but a portable Breviary with the Short Lessons and a little Missal. If I have a copy, the aforesaid boys will write [out others]. Now I am in the act of building another Church, with the view of distributing the boys in more places than one. I am now old and grey, more from toil and trouble than from age, for I am fifty-eight years old. I have a competent knowledge of the Tartar language and character, which is the usual language of the Tartars ; and I have now translated in that language and character the whole New Testament and the Psalter, and have had them written in their fairest character ; and I understand the language and read, and preach openly and in public as it were in testimony of the law of Christ. And I was in treaty with the aforesaid king George, if he had lived, to translate the whole Latin office that it might be sung throughout the whole land in his dominion. And whilst

he was alive Mass used to be celebrated in his church according to the Latin ritual in that character and language—both the words of the Canon and the Prefaces. And the son of the said king is called John after my name; and I hope in God that he will walk in his father's steps. According, indeed, to what I have heard and seen I believe that no king or prince in the world can equal the lord Khan in respect of breadth of territory, multitude of people, and greatness of wealth. The end. Dated in the city of Khanbalig of the kingdom of Cathay in the year of the Lord Mcccv, on the viii day of the month of January.

VII. This letter Brother John, the legate aforesaid of the Apostolic See, sent to a certain Brother Preacher, a spiritual man who was travelling round the parts of the East preaching the faith of Christ to the heathen, by certain Venetian merchants who returned from Tartary and gave to the said Brother Preacher a tablet of the great Khan the Emperor as a pledge of truthfulness. And the Brother himself sent it on to the Minor and Preaching Brothers in several places this side of the sea. And the Brother made it known that [there were] many Preaching Brothers who had learned the Latin, Greek, and Tartar letters and speech very well, and have hastened to go to Upper Tartary bearing books and chalices and vestments. And the aforesaid Brothers began their journey and came as far as Gazaria of the Northern Tartars; but they were unable to go further on account of wars, and so they abode in the same city preaching and baptizing the heathen there until the war should cease.

A letter of Brother John, legate of the Pope in Tartary, Archbishop.¹

VIII. To the Reverend Father in Christ . . to Brother . . to Brother . Vicar of the Minister General of the Order of Minor Friars, and to the Vicar of the Brothers and

¹ Archiepiscopo should probably be Archiepiscopi.

Master of the Order of Preachers, and to the Brothers of either Order dwelling in the province of the Persians, brother John of Monte Corvino of the Order of Minor Friars, an unprofitable servant of Christ, preacher of the holy Christian faith, legate and envoy of the Apostolic See of Rome; health and love in Him who is true love and the health of all. The requirements of love demand that those who are separated far and widely, and especially those who travel for the law of Christ, when they cannot see one another with unveiled face, shall at least comfort each other by words and letters. I have thought that you may reasonably be surprised that living so many years in so distant a province you have never received a letter from me. But I have wondered no less that never until this year have I received letter or greeting from any Brother or friend, and it seems that no one has remembered me; and most of all when I heard that rumours had reached you that I was dead. But now I tell you that last year, at the beginning of January, I sent a letter in few words about my state and position to the Father Vicar and the Brothers of the province of Gazaria by the hand of a certain friend of ours who was in the retinue of lord Toctai¹ Khan, who came to the lord Khan of Cathay. In which letter I asked the same Vicar that they would send on copies of it to you. And now [it has been told] me by good persons who have now come with the envoys of the aforesaid lord Toctai to the lord Khan of Cathay, that my letter reached you and that that same messenger who carried my letter came to Tauris afterwards from the city of Sarai. And so I do not think I will mention the facts contained in that letter or repeat what I wrote. And the first thing is about the persecution of the Nestorians. The second about the Church and the completion of the houses. I have had six pictures made of the Old and New Testament for the

¹ See n. 1, p. 550.

instruction of the ignorant; and [the explanations] are written in Latin, Tarsic, and Persian letters so that all tongues may be able to read. The third thing is that some of the boys whom I bought and baptized have departed to the Lord. The fourth is that from the time in which I have been in Tartary in Cathay I have baptized several thousands. In this year of the Lord Mcccv, moreover, I began another new place before the gate of the lord Khan, and between the palace and our place there is but the street, distant a stone's throw from the door of the lord Khan.

Master Peter of Lucalongo, a faithful Christian and a great merchant who was my companion from Tauris, himself bought the site for the place of which I have been speaking, and gave it to me by the love of God and the working of the Divine grace. For a more useful and suitable place for building a Catholic Church could not be had in the whole Empire of the lord Khan. I received the site in the beginning of August, and by the assistance and help of benefactors up to the feast of St. Francis¹ it was finished, with an enclosure wall and houses, complete offices, and an oratory which will hold two hundred persons. But on account of the winter I have not been able to finish the Church. But I have the timber collected at the house, and, by the mercy of God, I shall finish in the summer. I tell you it seems a sort of marvel to all who come from the city and from elsewhere, because they had not a rumour of it² before, and when they see the place new built and the red Cross placed aloft at the top.

And we in our oratory sing the office regularly by ear, because we have not the notes. The lord Khan can hear our voices in his chamber; and this wonderful fact is published far and wide among the heathen, and will have a great effect, as the Divine mercy shall dispose and fulfil.

¹ October 4. See n. 2, p. 553.

² Or "hence".

From our first Church and residence to the second Church which I have since built is a distance of two miles and a half inside the city which is very great. And I have divided the boys, and placed part in the first [Church] and part I have established in the second; and they perform the service by themselves. But I, as chaplain, celebrate in either Church by weeks, for the boys are not priests.

Concerning the great Empire of the Tartars

Concerning the regions of the Orientals, and especially concerning the Empire of the lord Khan, I give you to know that there is none greater in the world. And I have a place in his court, and a regular right of entrance, and of sitting, as legate of the lord Pope; and he honours me above all other prelates, whatever may be their titles. And although the lord Khan himself has heard many things about the Roman Court and the state of the Latins, yet he much desires to see envoys coming from those parts. In these countries there are many schools of idolaters of various creeds, and there are many monks of the different schools wearing different habits, and they are of much greater austerity and obedience than Latin monks are.

Of India I have seen the greater part, and made inquiries about other parts of India, and it would be of great profit to preach to them the faith of Christ if Brothers would come. But none should be sent except men of the most solid character, for the regions are very beautiful, full of aromatic spices and of precious stones. But they have few of our fruits. And on account of the great mildness and warmth of the air and region they go naked, covering the loins with a scanty covering. And consequently they have no need of our arts and crafts of tailors and cordwainers. There it is always summer and never winter. I baptized there about a hundred persons.

In the same letter Brother John himself says that a formal deputation came to him from Ethiopia, asking him to go thither to preach or to send good preachers, because since the time of the Blessed Matthew the Evangelist and of his disciples they had not had preachers to instruct them in the faith of Christ, and they had a great desire to attain to the true faith of Christ. And if brothers were sent there they would all be converted to Christ and become true Christians. For there are very many in the East who are called Christians and believe in Christ in name alone, but know nothing else about the Scriptures and the doctrines of the Saints, living in ignorance because they have no preachers and teachers.

Brother John also says that after the feast of All Saints he baptized four hundred persons; and as he has heard that a number of Brothers of either Order have gone to the Persians and to Gazaria, he exhorts them fervently to preach the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring forth fruit of souls. The letter itself said it was dated in Khanbalig, a city of the kingdom of Cathay, in the year of the Lord mcccvi, on Quinquagesima Sunday in the month of February.¹

¹ A third letter (anonymous, but certainly by John of Monte Corvino) exists. As it does not mention China or missionary work it does not seem necessary to print it here. It is in Italian and the MS. (? of the fourteenth century) is in the Laurentian Library. The text was printed by Kunstmann in the *Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 41r Band. München: Juli bis December, 1855; *Bulletins der drei Classen*, München, Nr. 22. 25 Dezembers, 1855, col. 171—Allo in Christo Frate Bartolomeo . . . col. 175—Iscritta fù questa lettera in Mabar cittade della Provincia di Sizia dell'India di sopra die xx. Dicembre anno Domini mccc. The English version will be found in Colonel Yule's *Cathay*, vol. i, pp. 209-218. The date of the letter was probably 1292 or 1293.

Other letters from John are mentioned by Sbaralea in his *Supplementum*, p. 443, as having been extracted by Wadding from the Vatican Registers. I have not yet been able to trace these in Wadding, and Mr. J. A. Twemlow kindly informs me that it is improbable that such letters would be found in the Papal Registers at Rome.

IX. Now Brother Thomas of Tolentino, who being himself too a Minor Friar and devoted preacher had already preached among the heathen for many years, returning with this letter from Tartary [and] coming into Italy, went into Gascony to the Roman Court beyond the mountains where Pope Clement was staying with the Cardinals. He brought the news of these mighty works of God first to Brother John of Muro¹ sometime Minister General of the Minor Friars and then a Cardinal. And Brother John himself reported to the lord Pope and the Cardinals. And Brother Thomas, being called into the Consistory, rehearsed in a notable speech before the Pope and the Cardinals and prelates these wonderful works of our Lord so well begun and maintained by Brother John of Monte Corvino and other Brothers, asking the lord Pope and the Cardinals to take care that this work of God might be increased and perfected.

Concerning the seven Brothers, Bishops.

And lord Pope Clement, filled with great joy, together with the Cardinals, at this vast change of the right hand of the Most High, longing and anxious that so holy a work of God should be maintained, charged Brother Gonzalvus, Minister General of the Minor Friars, that with the advice of the Brothers he should immediately choose seven good Minor Friars, men adorned with virtue, of approved good sense, and learned in the divine Scriptures, and that he should cause the Brothers to ordain and consecrate [them] Bishops² by his authority, and should

¹ Johannes de Muro Vallis was elected Minister General in June, 1296, made Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia in 1302, and died in 1312 or 1313. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.*, tom. iv, pp. 423 (b), 429 (d); *Ann. Min.*, tom. vi, p. 200. John presided at the general chapter held at Assisi at Whitsuntide, 1304, when Gondisalvus de Vallebona, a Portuguese, was elected Minister General. Gondisalvus died in 1313. Cf. *Ann. Min.*, tom. vi, pp. 39, 200.

² "Et ipsos fratres auctoritate sua. Episcopos ordinare et consecrare faceret." Perhaps we should read "ordinari et consecrari".

send them over into Tartary with the license of the lord Pope that they should ordain and consecrate Brother John to be Archbishop and Patriarch of the whole East; and that the seven Bishops should assist him in the neighbouring great cities, having been appointed Bishops at Khanbalig; that, as God had enlightened the Latin Church through St. Francis, by word and example alike, and had brought home to salvation many thousands of souls, so too through his disciples He might bring back to the Christian faith the infidel peoples of the East and schismatic and erring Christians, and the light of faith which Jesus Christ had kindled in the realms of the Tartars through the Minor Friars, might by them be so continually fostered and increased that it might never be put out. Seven good Brothers were therefore elected by the Minister General to be Bishops; to wit, two from the province of St. Francis which is the head of the Order, Brother Andrew, Reader, of Perugia and Brother Peregrine of Castello; Brother Nicholas of Apulia, formerly Minister of the province of St. Francis, Brother William of Franchya, and three other Brothers Bishops from other provinces of the Order. And the Minister General sent them with the licences of the lord Pope to inner Tartary and to India to Brother John.

A copy of the licence to Brother John.

The letter of Pope Clement to Brother John.

- X. Clement, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to the beloved son in Christ, Brother John of Monte Corvino of the Order of Minor Friars, chosen and appointed by us to be Archbishop of Khanbalig, health and Apostolic benediction. Etc.

(The King of kings, our Saviour Jesus Christ, wished the duty of preaching the Gospel, in which the Brothers of your Order have to labour diligently as careful helpers to the pastors of the Church, to be put forward as entitled

to a greater reward among the other works of charity which are recognized as more necessary to man labouring in this vale of misery and more acceptable in the sight of the Divine Majesty. Wherefore, in order that the word of the Lord may make worthy progress, it is right that spiritual men who have received pureness of life and the grace of wisdom with John, should be deputed for the duty of such pastoral care, to preach Christ the Lord to many peoples and nations and tongues and kings, especially in those places where the business of the catholic faith begs for the protection of the propagation of the Gospel of Salvation.)¹ Below follows: It has quite lately been brought to the notice of us and of the said Apostolic See by trustworthy report that you, fired with love and with zeal for the orthodox Christian faith, betook yourself once in person by command of the same See with the previous consent and special permission of your Order and of the Minister General to the very countries of the infidels of the East to gain for the living God the souls of the unbelievers; and that in the lands of the dominion of the Tartars you have, by the favour of the grace of the Holy Spirit, faithfully and diligently brought many of the infidels through the washing of holy baptism to the true faith of Christ. and the rest which follows. (Taking, therefore, into very careful consideration your conspicuous diligence in this holy work, we choose you, living in the said countries, by the consent of our brothers and the fullness of Apostolic power, to be Archbishop in the great and honourable city of Khanbalig, in the realm of the magnificent prince the great king of the Tartars, and appoint you chief pastor,

¹ The passage in brackets is added from Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* (continued by Eubel), tom. v, p. 37, No. 85. The Vatican Registers for the year 1307 appear to be lost or at least to be incomplete, and Eubel (l.c., n. 4) says: "The mutilated text of this bull has been restored from the bull which follows. Cf. *Ann. Min.*, an. 1307., Raynaldi *Ann. Eccles.* an. 1307, no. 20."

committing to you the full charge and care of all the souls living in the whole dominion of the Tartars, and granting you by the same authority full and free power to exercise all the rights which are recognized as belonging to Archbishops according as is allowed by canonical permission. Dated at Poitiers, 23 July in the second year (Mcccvii.)¹

In this licence lord Pope Clement grants to Brother John that when he has himself been made Archbishop he may be able to appoint and consecrate Bishops and priests and clergy in the cities and provinces of the East, and grants him all his authority, that, as the lord Pope presides in the Western and Latin Church as chief Pontiff over all Bishops and Prelates, as vicar of the blessed Peter, so also may Brother John preside as Archbishop over all Bishops and Prelates in those parts, with this agreement and specification that he always confesses his subjection to the Roman Pontiff and acknowledges [that he receives] the use of the pall from him;—as well Brother John himself as all future Archbishops of Khanbalig for ever to be subject to the Roman Church on these conditions. The lord Pope also commends Brother John because he has built Churches, and has caused pictures of the New and Old Testament to be painted in them in testimony of the wonderful works of our God, that ignorant people, who have never heard of these things nor known them, may learn by these pictures to understand God and his wonderful works. And that Brother John the Archbishop and the other Brothers might prosper the more in this divine work, the lord Pope Clement sent a complimentary letter to the lord Khan on this date. . . .

- XI. But they, the seven episcopal Brothers, and a very large number of other Brothers with them, filled with the Divine Spirit and ready to obey for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, set out as soon as they had received permission and benediction, preaching everywhere, the Lord working

¹ *Bull. Franc.*, tom. v, p. 37.

with them, [and] making a very great harvest of souls . . .

XII. ((86) To the beloved son Andrew of Perugia of the Order of Minor Friars, taken by us to be a Bishop of the Archiepiscopal See of Khanbalig in the dominion of the Tartars.

The King of kings, etc.¹ In order, however, that the growth of the salvation of souls in the same parts may go forward more perfectly and that the catholic faith may always progress by the help of the Lord from good to better through the teaching of the evangelical message, we (instructed by the orders of the King on high, who bowing the height of the heavens and becoming man that He might redeem man sent the disciples, whom He chose, to preach the gospel in all the world), wishing to call out men to undertake such a charge who are prudent and discreet and know how to instruct the unbelieving peoples for salvation, that they may make straight the paths of our God and render the people acceptable to Him, do specially depute you who are sufficiently learned in the law of the Lord, conspicuous for religious life, adorned with honesty of manners and commended on the score of many virtues, by the advice of our Brothers and the fulness of Apostolic power, to assist in the charge committed to the said Brother John for the greater salvation of souls, and take you to be Bishop in the said dominion and appoint you pastor, ordering by the authority of the present letter the venerable Brother John of Ostia and our beloved sons the Cardinals John, priest of the title of St. Marcellinus and St. Peter, and Luke, deacon of St. Mary in Via Lata, to grant

¹ These bulls, numbered 86, 87, 88, are taken from the *Bull. Franc.*, tom. v, pp. 38, 39. The original references are given as follows:—86: *Registrum Vaticanum*, tom. 54, fol. 138, ep. 652 (nn. 2216-2221); 87: *id.*, tom. 54, fol. 108, ep. 45 de Curia (n. 2300); 88: *ibid.*, ep. 46 de Curia (n. 2301). The opening sentences of 86 are transferred by Eubel to the bull granted to John of Monte Corvino; see p. 587 above.

you by our authority the gift of consecration, and appointing you suffragan of the above-named Archbishop, granting none the less to you and to the Bishops who succeed you in the same dominion that you may be able by our authority to use all and each of the gifts and concessions which we lately thought right to grant in our letter by Apostolic authority to the Brothers of the said Order who were going to the lands of the Saracens, Pagans, and other infidels. And so we wish and enjoin upon you for the remission of sins that, devoutly undertaking such pastoral office as has been committed to you in the name of God and of us, you betake yourself in person to the same parts with the grace of the Divine blessing to set forth the word of God as the grace of the Holy Spirit shall give you, and that, fully relying on the favour of us and of the Apostolic See, you so diligently and carefully take heed to carry out the said duty according to the wisdom given you by God, that you may bring forth fruit, and that your fruit remaining may grow into a race of sons of adoption, and the bride of Christ, the Church, rejoicing at her fertility in Christ her spouse, may rejoice that she has sent a faithful and useful minister, while the people of the said parts boast in the Lord that they have received an angel of salvation and peace, and that you, accordingly, may none the less merit more richly the thanks of the Church and the glory of the Divine reward.

Dated at Poitiers, July 23, in the second year of our pontificate.

To the same effect to the beloved son Nicholas of Bantia, of the same Order.

To the same effect to the beloved son Brother Gerard Albuin, of the same Order.

To the same effect to the beloved son Brother Ulrich of Seyfridsdorf,¹ of the same Order.

¹ This name seems to be Soyfridstorf in the MS. here, and Seistdstorf where it occurs below.

To the same effect to the beloved son Brother Peregrine of Castello, of the same Order.

To the same effect to the beloved son Brother William of Villanova, of the same Order.

(87) To the beloved sons Gerard Albuin, Ulrich of Seyfridsdorf, William of Villanova, Nicholas of Bantia,¹ Andrew of Perugia, and Peregrine of Castello, of the Order of Minor Friars, taken by us to be Bishops Suffragan of the Archiepiscopal See of Khanbalig of the dominion of the Tartars.

Considering lately *etc.* Dated at Poitiers, July 23, in the second year.

(88) To the beloved son Brother John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of Minor Friars, taken by us to be Archbishop of Khanbalig.

Considering long since *etc.* Dated at Poitiers, July 23, in the second year.)

XIII. And whereas the religious and venerable man Brother John, of the Order of the Minors, was the first to sow the seed of the word of God and found Churches in the realm of Cathay and in the great city of Khanbalig, and converted to Christ and baptized more than ten thousand of the Tartars, and Pope Clement V sent him the afore-said Brothers, who were consecrated Bishops, and the pontifical pall for himself and all his successors; one indeed of those episcopal Brothers, after very many years, sent home such a letter as is transcribed in brief below, with the following contents.²

XIV. Brother Andrew of Perugia, of the Order of Minor Friars, by divine permission called to be bishop, to the Reverend Father Brother +, Warden of the convent at Perugia, health and peace in the Lord for ever.

¹ The MS. reads Bontra.

² It seems to be better to take the two short paragraphs of the original as forming in this way one sentence. Throughout the Latin text the original has been copied as exactly as possible, with no attempt to correct the many blunders, the erratic use of capital letters, or the misleading punctuation.

And below follows :

For on account of the immense distance of lands and seas intervening between me and you, I can scarcely hope that a letter sent by me to you can come to your hands. And below follows: You will have learnt then how with Brother Peregrine of blessed memory, my fellow Bishop and the inseparable companion of my travels, after much labour and weariness, hunger and various inconveniences and perils by land and by sea alike, in which we were plundered of everything and even of our tunics and cassocks, I came at last by the help of God to the city of Khanbalig, which is the seat of the rule of the great Khan, in the year, as I believe, of the Lord's incarnation mcccxviii. And when the Archbishop had been consecrated there according to the orders given us by the Apostolic See, we continued to abide there for about five years; during which space of time we obtained *Alafa* from the magnificent Emperor for the food and clothing of eight persons. *Alafa*, moreover, is the expenses which the Emperor grants to the messengers of magnates, to ambassadors, warriors, and the practisers of different arts, and to poor jugglers and different persons of various classes; and these expenses surpass the incomes and expenditure of several Latin kings. With regard to the wealth, magnificence, and glory of this great Emperor, the vastness of the empire, the multitude of peoples, the large number of cities and the greatness of the same, and the orderly rule of the empire, in which no one dares lift a sword against another, I pass them by, because it would be long to write and the things would seem incredible to those who heard. For I myself who am on the spot hear such things that I am scarcely able to believe them. etc. Below follows: There is a certain great city near the Ocean sea which is called in the Persian tongue Zaitun,¹ in which city a wealthy Armenian lady built

¹ 泉州 Ch'üan-chou in Fukien; cf. p. 565, n. 2.

a large and sufficiently beautiful Church, which indeed, after it had been made a cathedral by the Archbishop, she gave of her own free will while she was living and left at her death, with adequate endowment, to Brother Gerard the Bishop and our Brothers who were with him. And he was the first to occupy that see. But when the said Bishop was dead and buried there, the Archbishop wished to make me the successor in the same Church. But I when I did not give my assent to such an appointment and succession, he conferred it on Bishop Brother Peregrine aforesaid, who, as soon as he found an opportunity, proceeded thither, and, after he had ruled the same for a few years, brought his last day to a close in the year of the Lord MCCCXXII, the day after the octave of the Apostles Peter and Paul.¹ And for nearly four years before his death, since I had not been comfortable for some reasons at Khanbalig, I obtained leave that the said Imperial charity *alafa* should be given me at the aforesaid city of Zaitun, which is about three months journey distant from Khanbalig. As I said, I obtained leave at my earnest request and with eight horses allowed me by the Emperor proceeded on my journey to the same city with great honour, and arrived there, the aforesaid Brother Peregrine being still alive. And in a certain grove at a quarter of a mile from the city I caused a convenient and beautiful Church to be built with all the offices sufficient for twenty Brothers, and with four chambers of which any one would be good enough for any Prelate. And in this place, indeed, I stay continually and live upon the royal charity which I have mentioned, which may amount, according to the reckoning of the Genoese merchants, to the annual value of a hundred golden florins or thereabout.² And of this charity I have spent a great part in the building of the aforesaid place,

¹ July 7.

² Less than £50 sterling according to Colonel Yule.

the like of which I do not know among the hermitages in the whole of our province for beauty and every convenience.

Finally, no long time having passed after the death of Brother Peregrine, I received a decree of the Archbishop about my appointment in the said cathedral Church, and to this appointment I was reasonably persuaded to give my consent. And I stay now in the place or Church of the city, now in the hermitage, according to my inclination. And I am of sound body and, as far as my age allows, vigorous and active, having indeed none of the natural defects or properties of old age except white hair. In this vast empire truly there are peoples of every nation under heaven and of every school. And each and all are allowed to live according to their school. For there is with them this opinion or, rather, error, that each one is saved in his own school. And we are able to preach freely and unmolested. But of the Jews and Saracens none is converted. Of the idolaters a very large number are baptized, but having been baptized they do not walk straight in the path of Christianity.

Concerning the holy Brothers.

Four of our Brothers were martyred in India at the hands of the Saracens.¹ And one of them was cast twice into a great fire, but escaped unhurt. And yet at so stupendous a miracle no one was converted from his misbelief. All these things aforesaid I have been careful to send briefly to your Paternity, that through you they may be passed on to the notice of others. To the spiritual Brothers and my particular friends I do not write because I do not know who are departed and who survive; so I ask them to have me excused. I send my greeting to all, and commend myself to all as cordially as I can. And do you, Father Warden, commend me to the Minister and Custos of Perugia and to all the other Brothers.

¹ Cf. p. 557, n. 2.

All the Bishops made Suffragans of the See of Khanbalig by the lord Pope Clement have departed in peace to the Lord. I alone remain. Brother Nicholas of Bantia and Brother Andrutius of Assisi and one other Bishop died as they entered lower India, in a certain country of extreme heat where several other Brothers also died and were buried. Fare you well in the Lord, Father, now and always. Dated at Zaitun in the year of the Lord mcccxxvi, in the month of January.¹

- XV. A few years before the above events a certain Brother of the Order of St. Francis, a native of Lower Germany, went abroad to the lands of the infidels to preach to them the Gospel of Christ. And I have read a long and full letter of his which he sent to his General of the northern Vicariate. He did laudable work there, bringing forth rich fruit of souls, for, as I have learnt and copied from the letter, he converted in the Empire of the great Khan, Emperor of the Tartars, much people to the faith of Christ by the fountain of baptism and the saving word of preaching; indeed he would have produced very great fruit of souls if the Nestorians, heretical or false Christians, who are grown many there, had not stood in his way. For they were jealous of their [?his] success and opposed him with all their might. From time to time they incited some of the elders of that land against him by means of calumny, false accusation, or flattery, and contrived that scourgings, imprisonments, and various punishments before the magistrates should be wickedly inflicted upon him for many days and years. But all these things he bore patiently for Christ. At length the great Khan perceiving (for he loved him dearly) that he was punished for no crime and made the prisoner of a tower or narrow dungeon, mercifully rescued him

¹ This letter on fol. 186 of the MS. is written in a hand slightly more easy to read but less accurate than that of fols. 171-3. On fol. 185 v^o Zaitun is written Zaitan. Cf. p. 557, n. 2.

from captivity and from all his troubles, restoring him to liberty and threatening with severe punishment those who should hurt him thereafter by word or deed. Living in the eastern and northern regions for some years, perhaps eight or nine, after his arrival there, he had learnt the language of that country or nation so perfectly that he was able with power and boldness to sow in it the seed of the word of God. He bore fruit and prospered so greatly among the people by means of his preaching, drawing men to the faith of Christ, that often many thousands flocked together to his baptism in the space of one month or week in the places where he had preached, as he confesses in the letter. The Gospel of Christ had never been preached [there] before. For although we read about the blessed Thomas that India (which had fallen to him in the lot of preaching) in great part believed in Christ through him and through two Roman boys in the days of Pope Sylvester and of Constantine the Roman Emperor, as is read in ecclesiastical history, yet according to his own statement to the places where he preached the Gospel of Christ no Catholic came before him to lay foundations or even the corner stone of the orthodox faith. No graft, nay, no little plant of the Apostolic faith sprouted there before him, but he being the first to sow there broadcast the seed of Christian teaching on good ground which had been broken up by the ploughshare of preaching and repentance, reaped a rich harvest of believers or converts to Christ; for being a diligent and unwearied labourer in the vineyard of Christ and in the Lord's field, he brought home sheaves not of a few but of very many thousands of converts. He converted also Prester John, a wealthy and powerful king, about whom many exaggerated stories are read in a little book which we have, and through him his whole tribe to Christ. But alas, after his death, a fatal blow to the Christian doctrine, the tribe was compelled to return

to the vomit of paganism through his successor, a most wicked idolater and tyrant: and these wandering and lost sheep the said Brother was unable to fetch back to the enclosure or fold of the faith, because he was too far removed from that kingdom, living in the realm of the great Khan, the lord of lords, more than twenty or thirty days journey away. This oft-mentioned Brother purchased forty native boys, and taught them Latin and Grammar. At length, however, after he had fed them with milk and soft food suited to children, he gave them solid meat, instructing them in Music and the Sacred Page. They also learnt the canonical Hours and the singing so perfectly that they were able to chant them very well alternately in the choir; and some of them also, who were more intelligent and had better voices than the others, led the choir gloriously. The great Khan took exceeding delight in their singing, and consequently the aforesaid Brother, their master and teacher, was often invited by him to bring with him four or six [boys] and solace him with their singing. And he, willingly obeying him and glad to give satisfaction and pleasure in this way, used often to repair to the presence of the great Khan and his satraps in the royal palace, taking with him alternately four, six, or eight of the aforesaid boys, and gave him no little joy and happiness through their sweet melody, charming him and his attendants so deeply, and wonderfully refreshing them. For this reason, and because of the simple purity of his life and his holy and laudable behaviour, that Brother found so great favour in the eyes of the prince whom we have often mentioned that he used most gratefully to regard him as a kind patron and protector and as it were a chief and particular friend in all his necessities.

NOTE

In writing about King George's capital (p. 548, note) I had failed to notice that the Syriac form Koshang is

confirmed by Odoric, who says Prester John's "principal city is called TOZAN [for which the majority of texts read Cosan, Cosam, Casan, or the like], and chief city though it is, Vicenza would be reckoned its superior [or: elle est meilleure et plus grande que Vincensie]. He has, however, many other cities under him, and by a standing compact always receives to wife the Great Khan's daughter". (*Cathay*, new ed., vol. ii, pp. 245, 246). Why Colonel Yule was confident that Tozan was Ta-t'ung I cannot say. One text (B.N., lat. 3195) gives the distance of Prester John's land from Cathay as "XV dietas", which agrees well with John of Monte Corvino's ".xx. dietas", and with the statement that Jabalaha reached Khanbalig from Koshang in fifteen days. The population of Ta-t'ung circuit in Odoric's days is given as 128,496, and the subordinate cities were not less than twelve. The Ta-t'ung circuit (though it may be that to which Odoric refers) was not, however, in fact identical with King George's apanage. Cf. *Yüan Shih*, c. lviii, fol. 14 v°, etc. Odoric's Prester John may have been John, the son of King George.